The New Criterion

October 1995

A monthly review *edited by Hilton Kramer*

Notes & Comments, 1
Duchamp & his legacy *by Hilton Kramer*, 4
Mr. Dennett's dangerous idea *by Phillip E. Johnson*, 9
The sensational Miss Alcott *by James W. Tuttleton*, 15
Peabody's Athenaeum *by Daniel Mark Epstein*, 21
Imperial Berlin revisited *by William Jay Smith*, 29
New poems *by Frederick Morgan, William Logan & Charles Tomlinson*, 34

Theater *by Mark Steyn*, 38; **Art** *by Mario Naves*, 44; **Music** *by John Simon*, 47; **The media** *by James Bowman*, 51; **Fiction chronicle** *by Brooke Allen*, 58
Books: *Carolyn G. Heilbrun* The education of a woman: the life of Gloria Steinem *reviewed by Christina Hoff Sommers*, 64; *Hadley Arkes* The return of George Sutherland *reviewed by Louis Auchincloss*, 68; *Albert Camus* The first man *reviewed by Renee Winegarten*, 71; *W. V. Quine* From stimulus to science *reviewed by Jenny Teichman*, 74; **Notebook:** Edward Shils, 1910–1995 *by H. R. Trevor-Roper*, 77

Volume 14, Number 2, $4.75

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lennart Anderson

Paintings

Michael Steiner

Sculpture

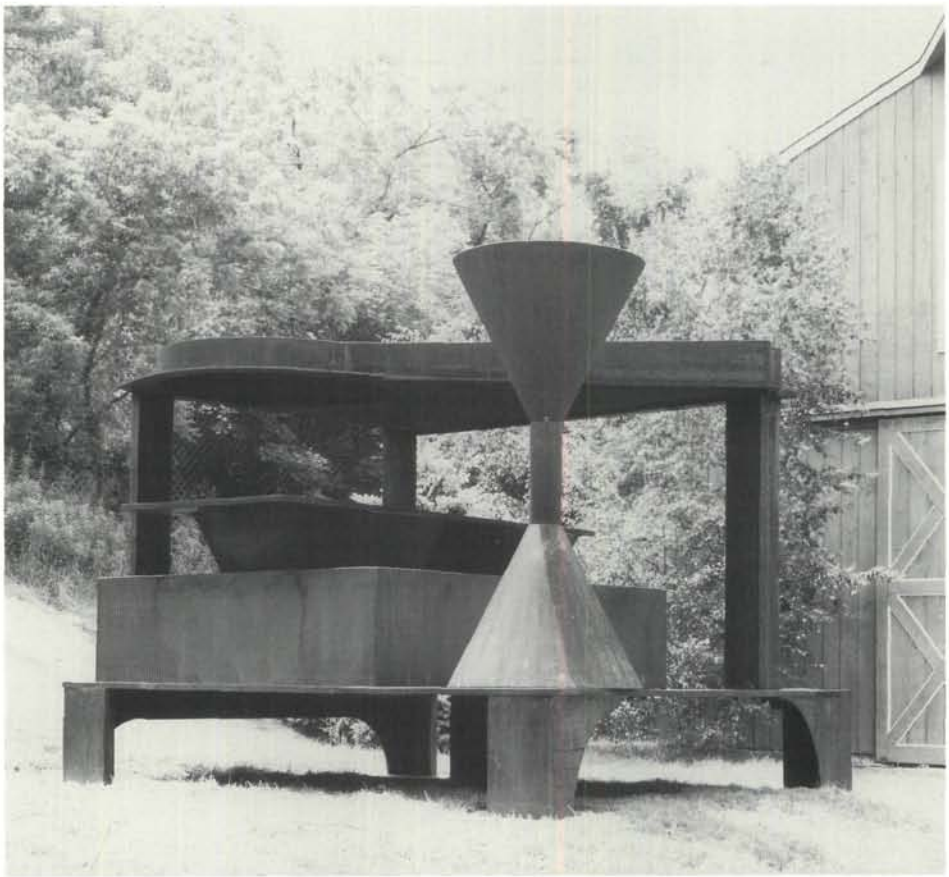
October 5 to 28

Salander-O'Reilly Galleries

20 East 79 Street New York 10021 Tel (212) 879-6606

Monday-Saturday 9:30 to 5:30

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Anthony Caro *Forum* 1992-3 Steel rusted 10'4" x 13' x 12'

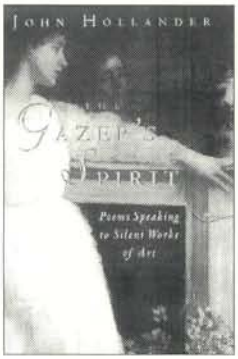
Sculpture Out Of Doors

André Emmerich Gallery

41 East 57th Street New York NY 10022

For further information please phone or fax
212 752 0124 / 212 371 7345

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The Gazer's Spirit

Poems Speaking to Silent Works of Art

JOHN HOLLANDER

This celebration of poetry and the visual arts presents more than fifty poems, from the Renaissance to the twentieth century, side by side with the works of painting, sculpture, drawing, print, and photography they address in their verses. The exquisite pairings of poets and artists include: Thom Gunn on Ander Gunn; Dante Gabriel Rossetti on Titian; Elizabeth Barrett Browning on Hiram Powers; Walt Whitman on George Inness; and many others.

Cloth $39.95 408 pages 8 color plates, 70 halftones

Fra Angelico

Dissemblance and Figuration

GEORGES DIDI-HUBERMAN

Translated by Jane Marie Todd

"Through an impressive combination of close visual scrutiny of Fra Angelico's images, a profound knowledge of the relevant theological and intellectual contexts of those images, and a critical intelligence that consistently shines through the argument, Didi-Huberman seduces the reader, who more than willingly yields."—David Rosand, Columbia University

Cloth $65.00 320 pages 22 color plates, 69 halftones

Court, Cloister, and City

The Art and Culture of Central Europe, 1450-1800

THOMAS DACOSTA KAUFMANN

"Kaufmann's new book is an enormous undertaking and brings fundamental new insights into a hugely complex subject. It will undoubtedly open a new chapter in the art history of Central Europe."—Hellmut Lorenz, Free University, Berlin

Cloth $45.00 584 pages 235 halftones

Artifice and Illusion

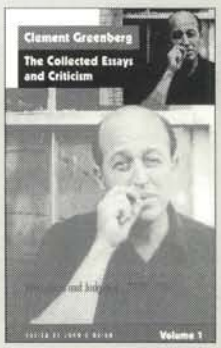
The Art and Writing of Samuel van Hoogstraten

CELESTE BRUSATI

"From the tricks of van Hoogstraten's mimetic realism to the surprises of his theory of vision, Celeste Brusati tells her story with lucidity, learning, and elegance. This beautifully illustrated book is an intellectual delight."—Natalie Zemon Davis, Princeton University

Cloth $75.00 432 pages 16 color plates, 158 halftones

Now complete in paperback



The Collected Essays and Criticism

CLEMENT GREENBERG

Edited by John O'Brian

Volume 1: Perceptions and Judgments, 1939-1944
Paper $15.95 296 pages 2 line drawings

Volume 2: Arrogant Purpose, 1945-1949
Paper $16.95 374 pages 2 halftones

Volume 3: Affirmations and Refusals, 1950-1956
Paper $16.95 340 pages 2 halftones

Volume 4: Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957-1969
Paper $16.95 358 pages 2 halftones

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
5801 South Ellis Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The New Criterion *October 1995*

Editor & Publisher *Hilton Kramer*
Managing Editor *Roger Kimball*
Poetry Editor *Robert Richman*
Associate Editor *Christopher Carduff*
Assistant Editor *David Yezzi*
Office Manager *Marjorie Danser*

Publisher 1982–1994 *Samuel Lipman*

Contributors to this issue

Brooke Allen reviews books regularly for *The New Criterion*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and other publications.

Louis Auchincloss's new novel, *The Education of Oscar Fairfax*, will be published next month by Houghton Mifflin.

James Bowman is the American editor of the London *Times Literary Supplement*.

Daniel Mark Epstein's most recent book of poems is *The Boy in the Well* (The Overlook Press).

Phillip E. Johnson is the author of *Darwin on Trial* and *Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law, and Education*.

William Logan's book of poems *Vain Empires* is forthcoming from David R. Godine.

Frederick Morgan's latest book, *Poems for Paula*, will be published in November by Story Line Press.

Mario Naves is an artist based in New York.

John Simon reviews theater for *New York* magazine and films for *National Review*.

William Jay Smith's translation of *Berlin: The City and the Court* by Jules Laforgue will be published next spring by the Turtle Point Press.

Christina Hoff Sommers is the author of *Who Stole Feminism?* (Simon & Schuster). She is an associate professor of philosophy at Clark University.

Mark Steyn hosted this summer's Glyndebourne Opera broadcasts on London's Channel 4.

Jenny Teichman teaches philosophy at New Hall, Cambridge.

Charles Tomlinson's latest book of poems, *Jubilation*, was published in May by Oxford University Press.

H. R. Trevor-Roper, the eminent historian, is the former Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge.

James W. Tuttleton is a professor of English at New York University.

Renee Winegarten wrote about Jules Verne for our April issue.

Published monthly except July and August by The Foundation for Cultural Review, Inc., 850 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019, a nonprofit public foundation as described in Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue code, which solicits and accepts contributions from a wide range of sources, including public and private foundations, corporations, and the general public. ISSN 0734-0222. October 1995, Volume 14, Number 2. Subscriptions: $36 for one year, $65 for two. Outside the United States, add $7 per year. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: send changes of address to The New Criterion, 850 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019. Copyright © 1995 by The Foundation for Cultural Review, Inc. Newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 2020 Superior Street, Sandusky, OH 44870. (800) 221-3148. Available in microfilm from University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. All correspondence should be addressed to The New Criterion, 850 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019. (212) 247-6980. Notice of nonreceipt must be sent to the Office Manager within three months of the issue date.

Advertising: Galleries & fine arts: Fred Stern, 44 Paulin Boulevard, Leonia, NJ 07605. (201) 947-2674. Publishers & others: Richard A. Vaughan, 129 Phelps Avenue, Rockford, IL 61108. (815) 398-8569.

The New Criterion is designed by Alvin and James Eisenman. It is set in 10-point Galliard and is printed by Science Press in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, USA.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Collaborationists

Kathi Ince

"collages everything"; her wooden sculptures are whimsical and witty. They "have attitude." The paintings, mostly landscapes and animal portraits, do not, being serene and reflective.

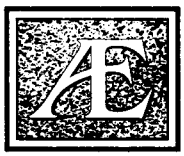
Michael Ince

designs in wood, his sculptures often reminiscently animalistic, his architectural follies created within an eye to rhythms and volumes suggested by the site.

Both have exhibited widely and are represented in corporate collections.

A. Peckham and E. Stoepel Peckham

the work they do together, three-dimensional constructions, and her etchings.



ATELIER A/E ENT.
323 WEST 22ND STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10011
TELEPHONE: 212.620.8103
FAX: 212.620.8106

HOURS:
FRIDAYS, SATURDAYS
AND SUNDAYS 12–6
AND BY APPOINTMENT

An exhibition celebrating the publication (by Bayeux Arts) of *Winged Spirits: 24 Collages* (by Jean Zaleski) and *24 Poems by American Poets,* edited by F.D. Reeve himself a poet, novelist and critic.

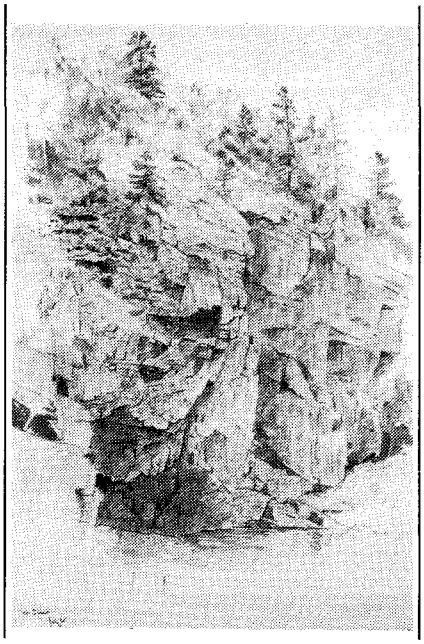
Book party and poetry reading:
Wednesday, Nov. 1, 1995
7 – 9 pm
Westbeth Community Room
55 Bethune Street
New York, NY 10014

On the Laws of the Poetic Art

Anthony Hecht

"Anthony Hecht is very much our poet-critic now, even as John Crowe Ransom and W. H. Auden were in previous generations. His *On the Laws of the Poetic Art* is civilized and superb criticism of the higher relations between poetry and the other arts, and is particularly valuable in this dark time, when barbarism and politics threaten all the arts."—Harold Bloom

The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts: Bollingen Series
7 color illustrations. 47 halftones.
Cloth: $24.95 ISBN 0-691-04363-9



New in paperback

The Artist's Mount Desert

American Painters on the Maine Coast

John Wilmerding

"[T]he author's affection for the place and subject, augmented by his prodigious knowledge, is clear throughout this valuable book. Wilmerding writes with lucid clarity and well-earned Olympian authority. . . ."
—Stephen May,
American Arts Quarterly

More than 160 illustrations, 59 in color.
Now in paper:
$24.95 ISBN 0-691-03750-7

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

AVAILABLE AT FINE BOOKSTORES OR DIRECTLY FROM THE PUBLISHER: 800-777-4726

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Notes & Comments: October 1995

Bowdlerizing the Bible

Our first thought on encountering *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version* was "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Or perhaps we should say "Father-Mother, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." That, anyway, is how the half-dozen scholars and "educators" who edited and translated this volume for Oxford University Press have chosen to render the famous passage from the Gospel according to Luke.

"Educators"? "Re-educators" is more like it. What these latter-day scribes and pharisees have crucified in this "undeniably progressive" volume is not Christ but his words and the words of those who sought to commemorate him. One naturally hopes that God in his mercy will, in the fullness of time, forgive them; no honest biblical scholar will be able to. Nor will anyone concerned with intellectual accuracy and truthfulness. For Oxford's latest foray into Bible publishing is not a translation at all; it is a breathtaking exercise in political correctness and religious bowdlerization undertaken in the name of "inclusiveness."

Indeed, Oxford admits as much, speaking in a press release of its "revolutionary new version of the Bible that attempts to do what has never been done before" by addressing "a wider range of agendas" than any previous translation. "Agendas" is definitely the *mot juste*—perhaps the only one to appear in connection with this project. If the book had been published on April 1—or if Oxford University Press had a reputation for levity—we might have suspected some sort of joke. It would at any rate take a wit of prodigious accomplishment to produce a more outrageous parody of political correctness in action. But while the Oxford *New Testament and Psalms* may be said to constitute a species of hoax—especially when perpetrated upon the unwary, who might mistake it for a legitimate translation—the plodding grimness of the work convinces us that it is meant in earnest.

One reads in the Acts of the Apostles that God is no respecter of persons. The up-to-date team that Oxford employed to produce this egregious work has taken that principle a step further: they are no respecters of language. It clearly does not matter to them what the Bible in fact says: their mission is to tell the world what it *should have said* if only its authors had been as enlightened as . . . well, as they themselves are, or believe themselves to be.

The one thing that can be said for this sort of political correctness is that it is gratifyingly predictable. Independent thinking, critical discrimination, informed judgment: all those complicating intellectual

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

habits are superfluous. Only unswerving allegiance to the preordained agenda remains. It makes for a wondrously simple, if stupefying, itinerary. Knowing that the Oxford *New Testament and Psalms* is *echt* correct, even a novice can predict its contents. All it takes is a glance at the roster of contemporary political shibboleths. What do the feminists tell us about "gender"? What do other members of the virtue police tell us about race, physical disabilities, familial relations, etc.? Just make a note of their proscriptions and the rest is painting by number.

We have already seen how God the Father was sent to Sweden for surgery and emerged as God the hermaphroditic "Father-Mother." His—Her? His-Her?—sense of diction seems to have been tampered with, too, for he no longer refers to "Himself" but to "Godself." This apparently is what the editors mean when they tell us that they have "improved" [*sic*] the "God language" of the Bible. Other corrective procedures follow suit. Once upon a time we were enjoined that, "if thy eye offend thee, pluck it out." Now the right hand must go as well, because mentioning it might offend the left-handed among us. So instead of sitting down "on the right hand of the Majesty on high" in Hebrews, Christ now sits down "*beside* the Majesty on high." The Greek word in question is δεξιός, which does not mean "beside" (παρά) but "right" as distinct from "left." Presumably, if Paul had meant to say "beside," he would have said it. But of course such niceties as what words actually happen to mean are secondary and expendable when one is engaged on a crusade to bring virtuousness to the benighted.

Does Christ regularly refer to himself as "the Son of Man"? No problem. It is the work of a moment for Oxford's "scholars and educators" to transform ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου—which any first-year student of Greek will tell you means "the Son of Man"—into "the Human One." Not only is this bad translation: it also has the effect of rendering Christ more distant and alien. We all know what a son is; how many of us have encountered a "Human One?" (To our ears, this sounds rather like referring to the pop star Michael Jackson as "the Gloved One.") In a question-and-answer sheet Oxford provided with advance copies of the book, one member of the editorial committee overseeing the new translation explained that "the Greek and Hebrew words translated 'man' are in fact the words for 'human being,' not the words for 'male'." Exactly. But the English word "man" does not refer exclusively to the male sex, either; God made us male and female, but we all belong to the family of man.

And so it goes. The blind and the halt are no longer referred to as such but as "people who are blind," etc. Children need not "obey" but, more gently, merely "heed" their parents, while wives—at last!—needn't "submit" to their husbands as long as they are "committed" to them. Meanwhile, the "Kingdom of God" has been closed until further notice: it has been replaced by the "Dominion of God" because "Kingdom" (the Greek is βασιλεία, from βασιλεύς, "king") was found to be "blatantly androcentric." For the same reason, the King himself had to be deposed and replaced by a less gender-specific "Ruler" or "Sovereign." And where we might once have been cast out into the darkness, our sophisticated awareness of racial connotations demands that "darkness" be occluded by various circumlocutions and mistranslations. So it is that the speaker in Psalm 107 no longer sits "in darkness and in the shadow of death" but "in captivity and in gloom." In Chapter Nine of the Gospel of John, we read that "the Jews (Ἰουδαῖοι) did not believe." According to the editors of *The New Testament and Psalms*, this is one of many passages in the New Testament that allows "for an anti-Semitic interpretation." We can't have that, of course, so the Jews are banished and replaced with "Religious Leaders."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There's more. If political rectitude often demands that things deemed offensive be excised, it sometimes requires that racial, sexual, and other sorts of quotas be filled. Hence the Bible's incantatory genealogical formulae must be brought up to date. It used to be that "Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judah and his brethren." But poor Matthew wrote before affirmative-action regulations went into effect; today, the beginning of his Gospel must be rewritten with an equal number of starring female roles. Now, according to the Oxford *New Testament and Psalms*, "Abraham and Sarah were the parents of Isaac, and Isaac and Rebekah the parents of Jacob, and Jacob and Leah the parents of Judah and his brothers." One big happy non-discriminating un-patriarchal extended family unit. No doubt they're non-smoking, too.

In one of the several glowing blurbs that bedizen the dust jacket of this book, a professor from Harvard describes *The New Testament and Psalms* as being "of the utmost significance not only for the churches, but also for the public discourse of a truly democratic society." Translated from Newspeak, "truly democratic" here really means "rigidly egalitarian and politically correct." Just how important *The New Testament and Psalms* would be in such a society—were we so unfortunate as to witness its coming into being—is an open question. Cleverer ideologues could surely produce something less clumsy and blatantly ham-fisted.

But it is worth keeping the grandiose terms of that blurb in mind as one ponders Oxford's *New Testament and Psalms*. It is completely consonant with the extraordinary moral and intellectual arrogance displayed by the "scholars and educators" responsible for this volume. Attempting, as they blithely inform readers, to "*anticipate developments in the English language*," what they have produced is a grotesque caricature. In their introduction to the translation, the editors suggest that they are only following the progressive tide of history: if they look askance at the masculine pronoun and so on, they are only responding to that liberating trend that requires enlightened people to speak of "the policeperson's ball" and that regards replays of the first moon landing as dated because the astronauts spoke of "one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." But of course this is true only in the hothouse confines of academia and other breeding-grounds of political conformity. Elsewhere, a "policeperson's ball" is something out of a stand-up comic's routine and "humankind" is regarded, correctly, as a silly piece of academic jargon.

We are told that the aim of this translation was to achieve "universal inclusiveness." What we have been given, however, is a book that subverts the genuine universality of the Bible by substituting a narrow program of contemporary ideological demands for the more difficult wisdom of the original. Gone are the magnificent sonorities of the King James translation. Gone, too, is any effort to achieve textual fidelity. What we are left with is a pretentious blandness that would be downright comic if it were not, in fact, malevolently absurd.

A press release informs us that the Oxford Bible Sales Director believes that this book will be a "best seller." Perhaps he is correct. But that does not alter the fact that the banner of "inclusiveness" is an idol, the latest Golden Calf erected by the smug and self-righteous to coddle their sense of superiority. And it is worth remembering that Jesus Christ, for one, does not seem to have been much of a partisan of this new Oxford "inclusiveness." Many, he said, are called, but few are chosen. Which was why, in Matthew 25:33, he "set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." The sheep made out all right. But the goats? "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Not an "inclusive" sentiment, exactly, but then, *pace* Oxford, the Bible was not written as a manual to encourage self-esteem.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Duchamp & his legacy

by Hilton Kramer

For Marcel Duchamp the question of art and life, as well as any other question capable of dividing us at the present moment, does not arise.
—André Breton, in *Littérature*, 1922

He approaches life as he does the chessboard: the gambits fascinate him without leading him to imagining that there is a meaning behind it all which might make it necessary for him to believe in something. . . . Duchamp's attitude is that life is a melancholy joke, an indecipherable nonsense, not worth the trouble of investigating.
—Hans Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art*, 1964

What accounts for the immense intellectual prestige which the mystique of Marcel Duchamp has enjoyed in this country—if only in certain circles, to be sure—for more decades than most of us can now remember? I speak at the outset of the artist's mystique, rather than of his art, for it is not so much Duchamp's art as the penumbra of ideas and mystifications associated with it that has cast a spell over the minds of so many otherwise intelligent people, both in the art world and beyond it. As an artist, after all, Duchamp produced one of the smallest *oeuvres* in the modernist canon. He was always a lazy revolutionary. His insouciance was often a mask of indolence, his indolence a reflection of the accidie or ennui he perfected as a way of life and somehow managed to endow with an aura of sanctity. That it was a sanctity of negation only enhanced its prestige.

How much that aura of sanctity owed to the effortless celebrity that Duchamp achieved in America while he was still in his twenties is a matter about which, of course, we can only speculate. What is a certainty, however, is that America was essential to the kind of career he elected to pursue once that celebrity had been thrust upon him in the Armory Show of 1913. The painting that made Duchamp an overnight sensation in that show—the *Nude Descending a Staircase*, painted in 1912—wasn't the masterpiece of audacity it was taken to be. As William S. Rubin observed in his "Reflexions on Marcel Duchamp" in 1960, "the *Nude* hardly compares in adventurousness with the great Analytic Cubist paintings of the same year" —the paintings of Braque and Picasso. Indeed, to place the artist who painted the *Nude Descending a Staircase* in the company of Braque and Picasso, never mind Matisse and Léger, is to define him as a minor figure. In the Paris avant-garde of the period before the First World War, Duchamp did not rank at all.

Only in America was he mistaken to be a major representative of the modernism that had been created by talents more robust than his. The truth is, the sensation which the *Nude* caused in New York in 1913 was more a reflection of *our* provincialism than of Duchamp's originality. Yet who can doubt that the entire career of the Duchamp who is now so admired, so solemnly studied and so widely emulated—the Duchamp

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of *The Large Glass*, the "Readymades," and the enigmatic notes and clues that accompany them—was determined by this early episode in mistaken identity? For that episode and the publicity it generated placed upon Duchamp's every subsequent artistic effort an obligation to come up with something that would prove to be equally provocative and controversial.

It is in this respect that Duchamp belongs to the history of the avant-garde in America rather than to its greater counterpart in Paris. It wasn't until the emergence of the Surrealist movement in the early 1920s that Duchamp secured an anchor to which he could attach himself in the Paris avant-garde. Even then, of course, it suited his temperament to use the Surrealist camp as a convenience, as it were, rather than be used by it. Mark Polizzotti, in his new biography of André Breton, gets the matter exactly right when he describes Duchamp as an "amiable fellow traveler" of both Dada and Surrealism who viewed the younger Breton "with a mixture of respect and sarcastic amusement." But then, of course, he viewed everything in life with sarcastic amusement.

With the Dada movement Duchamp had closer affinities, and many people still persist in portraying him as the very archetype of the Dada spirit—a practice that Duchamp did nothing to discourage. He certainly shared the Dada taste for creating scandal, yet with neither of the two principal activities that occupied the Dada movement—art and politics—did Duchamp have much sympathy. He professed to scorn the creation of the first (though in private he continued to pursue certain projects), while about the second he refused to pay it even the compliment of rejection. Alongside the copious *oeuvres* of the leading artists of the Dada movement—Jean Arp, Kurt Schwitters, Max Ernst, and Man Ray—Duchamp's is little more than a provocative patchwork; and with the politics of a Dada militant like Richard Huelsenbeck, Duchamp had no affinity whatever. One can well imagine with what "sarcastic amusement" he might have observed Breton's tortuous attempt to establish an *entente cordial* with the French Communist Party in the 1920s, but it is doubtful that he paid the matter the slightest attention. The sheer solipsism that circumscribed Duchamp's mental universe precluded such interests.

It was this inviolate solipsism, to which his works, his utterances, and his public career made so many arch allusions, that combined with the glamour of Duchamp's peculiar fame to create his special mystique. By suggesting that he believed in nothing, least of all in art, while at the same time enjoying the status of an admired and controversial artist, Duchamp left it to others to discover and codify what, if any, might be the private pieties and proclivities that actually governed his life and thought. Has any other modern artist ever given so many interviews about such a small number of objects without revealing anything very definite about their meaning or intention?

Those interviews were often brilliant performances. They introduced just enough variation into Duchamp's account—or rather, non-account—of his thought to sustain the interest of his acolytes while disclosing little, if anything, that wasn't already established as a coefficient of his personal myth. It was in this sense that Duchamp may have been the greatest "performance artist" of his time—an artist, in other words, whose "works" are seen to be mere props for the ritual re-enactment of a private destiny.

All through the later decades of his life, when it pleased Duchamp to beguile successive generations of artists and art-world functionaries as an eminence who had achieved a special status precisely because he had given up the mundane task of creating art, it was his historic act of negation that was assumed to be the basis of his moral authority—a moral authority that depended, paradoxically, on the good opinion of the many other artists who treated him as a guru and hailed him as a master while they themselves refused, of course, to follow his example in abandoning the creation of art.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

These artists understood very well that giving up art *à la Duchamp* would get them nowhere. Duchamp had already done that to great acclaim, and it was not a gesture that could be repeated with anything like the same effect. Besides, these artists were eager to get on with their careers and achieve the kind of success that had come to Duchamp himself at an early age. They hadn't yet done enough in their art or achieved enough public notice to endow any decision they might make to abandon the creation of art with the requisite shock and significance.

Their problem—the problem of the Duchampian epigones—was indeed paradoxical: how to honor and participate in the spirit of the master's negation of art while continuing with the creation of art. The solution, of course, was the sham compromise that goes by the name of "anti-art," which may best be defined as a species of art that claims, if only provisionally, to be something other than what it is—namely, art—in order to be judged by criteria other than those currently in effect or, better still, not to be judged at all but simply embraced as a form of expression more imperative than mere "art."

Much of the art of the last fifty years—much, certainly, that belongs to what the art establishment believes to be "avant-garde"—is anti-art of this persuasion, and Duchamp is indeed its patron saint. He set this train on its course, after all, with the "Readymades"—the snow shovel, the urinal, the bicycle wheel, etc.—that mocked the very concept of artistic creation and were yet quickly accepted, albeit in quotation marks so to speak, as authentic and even profound works of art. Today, nearly eighty years after Duchamp perpetrated this bluff on the New York art world, his anti-art legacy fills our museums and in some other quarters, too—the academy and the media—commands an esteem that is often greater than any enjoyed by works of art created by more traditional means. All of which is a reminder, if we still need one, that the conventions of this anti-art legacy have themselves now come to constitute an academy of sorts.

It is a measure of this academic status that the study of Duchamp is now something of an academic industry—so much so, indeed, that in this last decade of the twentieth century it looks more and more as if the university is going to be the final resting place of Duchamp's reputation. This may tell us more about the fate of the university at the end of the twentieth century than it tells us about Duchamp—for much of the academic literature on Duchamp amounts to little more than pedantry in the service of uncritical adulation—but it also suggests that the appropriation of Duchamp by the academy may be the ultimate Duchampian irony: a revolution in sensibility buried in a cemetery of scholarly footnotes.

To this vast literature on Duchamp there has now been added something new—an avowedly "humanistic" and "old-fashioned" historical approach to the subject called *The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp*.[1] Its author—Jerrold Seigel—is not an art historian or art-world groupie but the William J. Kenan Professor of History at New York University. His aim in writing about Duchamp is, as he notes in the preface to this study, "to clarify certain features of the avant-garde and of modern cultural history more generally." In this respect, at least, his study of Duchamp may be considered a sequel to his earlier history of *Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830–1930*, published in 1986. And while in much of the book Professor Seigel doesn't write as a critic of Duchamp—on the contrary, he is clearly captivated by the audacity of Duchamp's performance and determined to give it the benefit of many doubts—in the end *The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp* is really a contribution to the demystification of his subject.

---

1 *The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp: Desire, Liberation, and the Self in Modern Culture*, by Jerrold Seigel; University of California Press, 291 pages, $34.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is for this reason that one wishes the book had begun where it ends, with the chapter on "Art and Its Freedoms." For it isn't until the last page of *Private Worlds* that Professor Seigel explicitly raises the question that is now the principal reason for us to take an imperative interest in Duchamp and his legacy. This is the key passage:

> As the claim that dissolving the separate sphere of art would liberate energies capable of creating new forms of life loses what persuasive force it once bore, we realize more and more that art owes what power it has to enrich the rest of life to the very separation and independence against which many avant-garde projects were directed; what we gain by dissolving the boundaries between art and life turns out to be much less than what we risk losing.

This is immediately preceded by an observation that is even more devastating in its assessment of Duchamp's influence:

> As some recent critics have begun to argue, the consequences of merging art into life have not been what Breton and others hoped, leaving life untransformed but art much weakened by the absence of criteria to decide whether any given object belongs within its sphere and, of those objects that do, which are good. The sovereignty of the artist who claims the right to declare that art is whatever he or she designates has clashed with the equal authority of audiences to accept or reject what is offered them; the result is only a higher level of mutual suspicion and confusion.

This is indeed where a study of Duchamp and his legacy ought now to begin, and it is one of the disappointments of Professor Seigel's book that the subject comes too late to be fully explored. There are some excellent things in this last chapter on "Art and Its Freedoms"—most notably, the comparisons that are made with Picasso, John Cage, Paul Valéry, Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, and Nietzsche—but even these are somewhat blurred in the final equivocations about what in Duchamp's legacy remains "vital and worth preserving."

As for what Professor Seigel means by those "private" worlds he alludes to in his title—in the end they amount to little more than the defeated desires of a Freudian family romance. Professor Seigel describes his study of Duchamp as "only mildly and partially psychobiographical," but in fact the book is regrettably "old-fashioned" in the way it accords intellectual priority to a quite conventional Freudian analysis of Duchamp and his *oeuvre*. Did Duchamp feel "neglected as a boy"? Did he suffer from "his mother's indifference"? Did he entertain fantasies of incest about his sister Suzanne? Did all this leave him sexually "deadened" in later life? Was he impotent or merely sexually indifferent to the many women with whom he was thought to have had affairs of a sort in his maturity? Or was he a secret homosexual? And was much of his art, in any case, some sort of masturbation fantasy?

About most of these questions we have no definitive answers. Professor Seigel's speculations are better informed than most others I have read, but they leave us wondering if he quite understands the extent to which they, too, contribute to the demystification of his subject's reputation. For what they add up to is a protracted case of voyeurism haunted by impotence, and they leave us with a distinct impression of Duchamp as a man whose relation to art was remarkably parallel to his relation to sex—an impression of total freedom won at the price of a bemused and self-absorbed sterility. And if Professor Seigel believes what he says about Duchamp's damaged psyche, then what does it mean for him to invite us to "celebrate the courage and originality with which [Duchamp] explored those inner spaces" on the last page of this book?

The question is an important one, for what I have called Duchamp's mystique derives, above all, from the conception of radical freedom he brought to the artistic vocation—a conception of freedom so fundamentally inimical to the artist's vocation

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that it renders it impotent. For in art, as in life, there are only choices to be made, obstacles to overcome, contingencies to engage and accommodate. To "drop out" is to abandon effort and inspiration in favor of a radical passivity—which is what the Duchampian idea of total freedom finally comes down to.

Why, then, should we speak of "courage" when what we are dealing with is failure—a failure of spirit, certainly, and very likely a failure of talent as well. Failure in art, failure in life: isn't that the unacknowledged subtext of the story that is told in *The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp*? That Duchamp had the "genius" to turn that failure into a myth of success and superiority is an important part of the story, too, of course—maybe even the more important part, for it returns us to the American setting of his career and the role played by American provincialism and gullibility in the creation of the Duchamp cult. And to the study of that subject "psychobiography"—Freudian or otherwise—doesn't have much to contribute.

In the end, alas—and despite the demurrals of its last chapter—*The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp* is a study remarkably reluctant to face up to the implications of its own findings. Inside this book there is a better book waiting to be written, but the one we have been given leaves the subject of Duchamp and his legacy safely enclosed in the equivocations of the academy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Daniel Dennett's dangerous idea

by Phillip E. Johnson

Daniel Dennett's fertile imagination is captivated by the very dangerous idea that the neo-Darwinian theory of biological evolution should become the basis for what amounts to an established state religion of scientific materialism. In his new book on the subject, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life*,[1] Dennett, who is director of the Center for Cognitive Studies at Tufts University and a prominent philosopher of science, takes the scientific part of his thesis from the inner circle of contemporary Darwinian theorists: William Hamilton, John Maynard Smith, George C. Williams, and the brilliant popularizer Richard Dawkins. When Dennett describes the big idea emanating from this circle as dangerous, he does not mean that it is dangerous only to religious fundamentalists. The persons whom he accuses of flinching when faced with the full implications of Darwinism are scientists and philosophers of the highest standing: Noam Chomsky, Roger Penrose, Jerry Fodor, John Searle, and especially Stephen Jay Gould.

Each one of these very secular thinkers supposedly tries, as the simple religious folk do, to limit the all-embracing logic of Darwinism. Dennett describes Darwinism as a "universal acid; it eats through just about every traditional concept and leaves in its wake a revolutionized world-view." One thinker after another has tried unsuccessfully to find some way to contain this universal acid, to protect *something* from its corrosive power. Why? First let's see what the idea is.

Dennett begins his account with John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689). In that classic of philosophical empiricism, Locke grappled with the question, "Which came first, mind or matter?" Locke's answer was that mind had to have come first, because "it is impossible to conceive that ever bare incogitative matter should produce a thinking intelligent Being." David Hume mounted some powerful skeptical arguments against this mind-first principle, but in the end he couldn't come up with a solid alternative.

Darwin did not set out to overturn the mind-first picture of reality, but to do something much more modest: to explain the origin of biological species, and the wonderful adaptations that enable those species to survive and reproduce in diverse ways. The answer Darwin came up with was that these adaptations, which had seemed to be intelligently designed, are actually products of a mindless process called natural selection. Dennett says that what Darwin offered the world, in philosophical terms, was "a scheme for creating Design out of Chaos without the aid of Mind." When the Darwinian outlook became accepted throughout the scientific world, the stage

1 *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life*, by Daniel C. Dennett; Simon & Schuster, 586 pages, $30.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was set for a much broader philosophical revolution. Dennett explains that

> Darwin's idea had been born as an answer to questions in biology, but it threatened to leak out, offering answers—welcome or not—to questions in cosmology (going in one direction) and psychology (going in the other direction). If [the cause of design in biology] could be a mindless, algorithmic process of evolution, why couldn't that whole process itself be the product of evolution, and so forth, *all the way down*? And if mindless evolution could account for the breathtakingly clever artifacts of the biosphere, how could the products of our own "real" minds be exempt from an evolutionary explanation? Darwin's idea thus also threatened to spread *all the way up*, dissolving the illusion of our own authorship, our own divine spark of creativity and understanding.

The metaphysical reversal was so complete that it soon became as unthinkable within science to *credit* any biological feature to a designer as it had previously been unthinkable to do without the designer. Whenever seemingly insuperable problems were encountered—the genetic mechanism, the human mind, the ultimate origin of life—biologists were confident that a solution of the Darwinian kind would be found. To be sure, the cause of materialist reductionism was sometimes set back by "greedy reductionists" like the behaviorist B. F. Skinner, who tried to explain human behavior as a direct consequence of material forces. The catchy metaphor Dennett employs to describe the difference between the greedy and good kinds of reductionism is "cranes, not skyhooks." The origin of, say, the human mind must be attributed to some process firmly anchored on the solid ground of materialism and natural selection (a crane), and not to a mystery or miracle (a skyhook), but this does not mean that human behavior or mental activity can be understood *directly* on the basis of material concepts like stimulus and response or natural selection.

Although many aspects of evolutionary theory remain controversial, Dennett asserts confidently that the overall success of Darwinism-in-principle has been so smashing that the basic program—all the way up and all the way down—is established beyond question. Any yet the resistance continues. Some of it comes from religious people, who want to preserve some role for a creator. Dennett just brushes aside the outright creationists, but takes more pains to refute those who would say that God is the author of the laws of nature, including that marvelous evolutionary process that does all the designing. The Darwinian alternative to a Lawgiver at the beginning of the universe is to postpone the beginning indefinitely by hypothesizing something like an eternal system of evolution at the level of universes.

For example, the physicist Lee Smolin has proposed that black holes are in effect the birthplaces of offspring universes, in which the fundamental physical constants would differ slightly from those in the parent universe. Since those universes that happened to have the most black holes would leave the most "offspring," the basic Darwinian concepts of mutation and differential reproduction could be extended to cosmology. Dennett contends that whether this or any other model is testable, at least cosmic Darwinism relies on the same kind of thinking that has been successful in scientific fields like biology where testing is possible, and that is enough to make it preferable to an alternative that brings in a skyhook. He does not attempt to explain the origin of the cosmic evolutionary process. It's just mutating universes all the way down.

Much of the resistance to Darwinism "all the way up" comes from scientists and philosophers who deny the capacity of natural selection to produce specifically human mental qualities like the capacity for language. Foremost among these is Noam Chomsky, founder of modern linguistics, who describes a complex language program seemingly "hard-wired" into the human brain, which has no real analogy in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

animal world and for which there is no very plausible story of step-by-step evolution through adaptive intermediate forms. Chomsky readily accepts evolutionary naturalism in principle, but (supported by Stephen Jay Gould) he regards Darwinian selection as no more than a place holder for a true explanation of the human language capacity which has not yet been found.

To true-believing Darwinists like Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett, all such objections are fundamentally misconceived. The more intricately "designed" a feature appears to be, the *more* certain it is to have been constructed by natural selection—because there is no alternative way of producing design without resorting to impossible skyhooks. Even in the toughest cases, where plausible Darwinian hypotheses are hard to imagine and impossible to confirm, a Darwinian solution simply has to be out there waiting to be found. The alternative to natural selection is either God or chance. The former is outside of science, and also apparently outside the contemplation of Gould or Chomsky; the latter is no solution at all. Once you understand the dimensions of the problem, and the philosophical constraints within which it must be solved, Darwinism is practically true by definition —regardless of the evidence.

I call this a very interesting situation. Within science the Darwinian viewpoint clearly occupies the high ground, because nobody has come up with an alternative for explaining Design that does not invoke an unacceptable pre-existing Mind. (Dennett easily refutes such hype-induced notions as that a physics of self-organizing systems from the Santa Fe Institute is in the process of replacing Darwinism.) But the rulers of this impregnable citadel are worried because not everybody believes that their citadel is impregnable. They are troubled not only by polls showing that the American public still overwhelmingly favors some version of supernatural creation, but also by the tendency of prominent scientists to accept Darwinism-in-principle, but to dispute the applicability of the theory to specific problems, usually the problems about which they are best qualified to speak.

Dennett thinks that the dissenters either fail to understand the logic of Darwinism or shrink from embracing its full metaphysical implications. I prefer another explanation: Darwinism is a lot stronger as philosophy than it is as empirical science. If you aren't willing to challenge the underlying premise of scientific materialism, you are stuck with Darwinism-in-principle as a creation story until you find something better, and it doesn't seem that there *is* anything better. Once you get past the uncontroversial examples of microevolution, however, such as finch beak variations, peppered moth coloring, and selective breeding, all certainty dissolves in speculation and controversy. Nobody really knows how life originated, where the animal phyla came from, or how natural selection could have produced the qualities of the human mind. Ingenious hypothetical scenarios for the evolution of complex adaptations are presented to the public virtually as fact, but skeptics within science derisively call them "just-so" stories, because they can neither be tested experimentally nor supported by fossil histories.

Many scientists who swear fealty to Darwinism on philosophical grounds put it aside when they get down to scientific practice. A good example is Niles Eldredge, a paleontologist who collaborated with Stephen Jay Gould in the famous papers advocating that evolution proceeds by "punctuated equilibria," meaning long changeless periods which are occasionally interrupted by the abrupt appearance of new forms. "Punk eek" was widely interpreted at first as an implied endorsement of a macromutational alternative to Darwinian gradualism, a misunderstanding that led scornful Darwinists to dismiss the idea as "evolution by jerks," but both Gould and Eldredge insisted that the unseen process of change was Darwinian. Eldredge in particular is so determined to wash away the taint of heresy that he has taken to describ-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing himself as a "knee-jerk neo-Darwinian," a label that seems both to protest too much and to imply a willingness to overlook disconfirming evidence.

On the other hand, Eldredge rejects what he calls "ultra-Darwinism," the position of Dawkins and Dennett, on grounds that obscurely imply rejection of the very factor that makes Darwin's idea dangerous, the claim that natural selection has sufficient creative power to account for design. For example, he writes in his 1994 book *Reinventing Darwin* that ultra-Darwinians are guilty of "physics envy" because they "seek to transform natural selection from a simple form of record keeping . . . to a more dynamic, active force that molds and shapes organic form as time goes by." Eldredge has no philosophical problem with atheistic materialism; his ambivalence stems entirely from the embarrassingly un-Darwinian fossil record, as described in this typical paragraph:

> No wonder paleontologists shied away from evolution for so long. It never seems to happen. Assiduous collecting up cliff faces yields zigzags, minor oscillations, and the very occasional slight accumulation of change—over millions of years, at a rate too slow to account for all the prodigious change that has occurred in evolutionary history. When we do see the introduction of evolutionary novelty, it usually shows up with a bang, and often with no firm evidence that the fossils did not evolve elsewhere! Evolution cannot forever be going on somewhere else. Yet that's how the fossil record has struck many a forlorn paleontologist looking to learn something about evolution.

Whatever is motivating Eldredge to give all that fervent lip-service to Darwinism, it obviously is not anything he has discovered as a paleontologist. In fact, the real problem is understood by everyone, although it has to be discussed in guarded terms. What paleontologists fear is not the scientific consequences of disowning Darwinism but the *political* consequences. They fear it might lead to a takeover of government by religious fundamentalists who would shut off the funding.

There are paleontologists who are more supportive of Darwinism than Eldredge, just as there are other eminent scientists who are more explicit in insisting that the neo-Darwinian variety of evolution is valid only at the "micro" level. Regardless of the number or status of the skeptics, the usual scientific practice is to retain a paradigm, however shaky, until somebody provides a better one. I will assume *arguendo* that this "best we've got" policy is justifiable within science itself. The question I want to pursue is whether non-scientists have some legal, moral, or intellectual obligation to accept Darwinism as absolutely true, especially when the theory is encountering so many difficulties with the evidence. The issue comes up in many important contexts; here are two examples.

First, consider the situation of Christian parents, not necessarily fundamentalists, who suspect that the term "evolution" drips with atheistic implications. The whole point of Dennett's thesis is that the parents are dead right about the implications, and that science educators who deny this are either misinformed or lying. Do parents then have a right to protect their children from indoctrination in atheism, and even to insist that the public schools include in the science curriculum a fair review of the arguments *against* the atheistic claim that unintelligent natural processes are our true creator?

Dennett cannot be accused of avoiding the religious liberty issue, or of burying it in tactful circumlocutions. He proposes that theistic religion should continue to exist only in "cultural zoos," and he says this directly to religious parents:

> If you insist on teaching your children falsehoods—that the earth is flat, that "Man" is not a product of evolution by natural selection—then you must expect, at the very least, that those of us who have freedom of speech will

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> feel free to describe your teachings as the spreading of falsehoods, and will attempt to demonstrate this to your children at our earliest opportunity. Our future well-being—the well-being of all of us on the planet—depends on the education of our descendants.

Of course it is not freedom of speech that worries the parents, but the power of atheistic materialists to use public education for indoctrination, while excluding any other view as "religion." If you want to know how such threats sound to Christian parents, try imagining what would happen if some prominent Christian fundamentalist addressed similar language to Jewish parents. Would we think the Jewish parents unreasonable if they interpreted "at the very least" to imply that young children may be forcibly removed from the homes of recalcitrant parents, and that those metaphorical cultural zoos may one day be enclosed by real barbed wire? Strong measures might seem justified if the well-being of everyone on the planet depends upon protecting children from the falsehoods their parents want to tell them.

I will pass over the legal issues raised by this program of forced religious conversion because the intellectual issues are even more interesting. Granted that Darwinism is the reigning paradigm in biology, is there some rule in the academic world which requires non-scientists to accept Darwinian principles when they write about, say, philosophy or ethics? John Searle, my colleague at Berkeley, thinks so. In the first chapter of his recent book *The Construction of Social Reality*, Searle states that it is necessary "to make some substantive presuppositions about *how the world is in fact* in order that we can even pose the questions we are trying to answer (about how other aspects of reality are socially constructed)." According to Searle, "two features of our conception of reality are not up for grabs. They are not, so to speak, optional for us as citizens of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century." The two compulsory theories are that the world consists entirely of the entities that physicists call particles, and that living systems (including humans and their minds) evolved by natural selection.

I think that Searle undermines his whole project by virtually ordering his readers not to notice that scientific materialism and Darwinism are themselves socially constructed doctrines rather than objective facts. Scientists assume materialism because they define their enterprise as a search for the best materialist theories, and this culturally-driven methodological choice is not even evidence, let alone proof, that the world really does consist only of particles. As an explanation for design in biology, Darwinism is perfectly secure when it is regarded as a deduction from materialism, but remarkably insecure when it is subjected to empirical testing. Given that what we most respect about science is its fidelity to the principle that empirical testing is what really matters, why should philosophers allow scientists to tell them that they must accept assumptions that don't pass the empirical test?

Searle is a particularly poignant example, because he is famous for defending the independence of the mind against the onslaught of the materialist "strong AI" (artificial intelligence) program, and also for defending traditional academic standards against the corrosive relativism of the fact/value distinction. He is so skillful in argument that he almost holds his own even after leaping gratuitously into a pool of universal acid, but why accept the disadvantage? Searle could seize the high ground if he began by proposing that any true metaphysical theory must account for two essential truths which materialism cannot accommodate: first, that mind is more than matter; and second, that such things as truth, beauty, and goodness really do exist even if most people do not know how to recognize them. Scientific materialists would answer that they proved long ago, or are going to prove at some time in the future, that materialism is true. They are bluffing.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Science is a wonderful thing in its place. Because science is so successful in its own territory, however, scientists and their allied philosophers sometimes get bemused by dreams of world conquest. The philosopher of science Paul Feyerabend put it best: "Scientists are not content with running their own playpens in accordance with what they regard as the rules of the scientific method, they want to universalize those rules, they want them to become part of society at large, and they use every means at their disposal—argument, propaganda, pressure tactics, intimidation, lobbying—to achieve their aims." Samuel Johnson gave the best answer to this absurd imperialism: "A cow is a very good animal in the field; but we turn her out of a garden."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The sensational Miss Alcott

by James W. Tuttleton

As soon as she went to her room, [Jo] got out her papers, and carefully re-read every one of her stories. . . . "They are *trash, and will soon be worse than trash if I go on; for each is more sensational than the last. I've gone blindly on, hurting myself and other people, for the sake of money;—I know it's so—for I can't read this stuff in sober earnest without being horribly ashamed of it; and what* should *I do if they were seen at home, or Mr. Bhaer got hold of them?"*

—Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*

Could Louisa May Alcott really have worried that her writings were trash? Could she have felt that they were just sensational rubbish produced for pelf? Was it possible that the author of *Little Women: or, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy* (1868–69)—that classic of nineteenth-century American fiction—felt *ashamed* of her literary production?

I shall return to this question in a moment. But in the meantime it is worth stressing that Louisa May Alcott *did* have to write for money. She was the unlucky child of one of the most improvident figures in American intellectual and literary history, Amos Bronson Alcott (1799–1888). This otherworldly Transcendentalist, a gentle dreamer with radical educational theories, simply could not earn a living for his wife, Abba (the Marmee of *Little Women*), and his four daughters: Anna (the domestic Meg March), Elizabeth (the frail Beth), May (the artistic but annoying Amy), and Louisa (the coltish writer Jo, who could "never learn to be respectable"). Every one of his utopian ventures seemed to fail—including his Temple School in Boston (where Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody, and Dorothea Dix taught) and the utopian community Fruitlands (which Louisa later satirized in *Transcendental Wild Oats*). Emerson thought Bronson Alcott a saint and a spiritual genius, but his *Conversations with Children on The Gospels* (1836–37) and his "Orphic Sayings" (published in *The Dial*) are in fact obscure and oracular effusions of what was then called "The Newness."

Concord, Massachusetts, however, was not an unhappy place for the indigent Transcendentalist of the mid-nineteenth century. Given the moral vision of neighbors like Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, the Channings, and the Ripleys, plain living and high thinking were commanded—as if by township ordinance; and to this law the Bronson Alcotts were faithful. Still, life was a succession of dingier and dingier boarding houses. However vivacious and wonderful the family, the Alcott girls were awfully dowdy in their unfashionable, patched, and madeover hand-me-downs; Abba Alcott lacked more than pin money and was in frequent need of food or furniture; and the periodic bailout by charitable neighbors came to be called, by the girls, "The Alcott Sinking Fund." Louisa May "went into service" for a time, but she left rather quickly after an episode of sexual harassment. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

publisher James T. Fields told her that she couldn't write and ought to stick to teaching—advice that naturally got her dander up, with the effect that she said to herself: "Just wait, Mr. Fields. I *won't* teach; and I *can* write, and I'll prove it. . . . And I'll write something you'll want to buy."

Writing something that a publisher would want *to buy* haunted Miss Alcott throughout her whole writing career. But in producing *Little Women*, a novel transparently about Alcott family life, she resolved at last her financial worries, captured a huge and admiring public, and was able to provide for her parents for the rest of their lives. She was, as her father called her, "Duty's faithful child."

Little Women, in its first twenty-three chapters, was so popular in 1868 that Miss Alcott's publisher, Thomas Niles, naturally requested a follow-up; and what is now called Part II of the novel was published in 1869 to even greater applause. Thereafter, she devoted herself to the production of the "Little Women Series," seven additional novels after the manner of *Little Women*. These included *An Old-Fashioned Girl* (1870), *Little Men* (1871), *Eight Cousins* (1875), *Rose in Bloom* (1875), *Under the Lilacs* (1878), *Jack and Jill* (1880), and *Jo's Boys, and How They Turned Out* (1886). The six volumes of a series called *Aunt Jo's Scrap-Bag* (1872–82) and a number of other late potboilers also reflect a shrewd sense of how popular material may be continually recycled, but they are clear evidence of the decline of Miss Alcott's writing power.

I have called *Little Women* a "classic," and so it is—even if only a minor classic. It exhibits many of the defects of the domestic sentimental fiction of the Victorian era. I mean novels like Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* (1850), Maria Cummins's *The Lamplighter* (1854), Caroline Lee Whiting Hentz's *Ernest Linwood* (1856), and Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth's *The Hidden Hand* (1859). These authors made up some of the "d—d mob of scribbling women," as Hawthorne called them, whose sentimental trash glutted the fiction market and kept him, he thought, from making a living. Their immensely popular books deal with the travails of a heroine who, likely as not, is too proud, hankers for independence, tries to go it alone as a teacher or governess, finds herself pursued by a libertine, and is tormented by her own disturbing emotions. But she finally sees the light, settles down with a safe man in marriage, gives up her fantastic notions of women's liberation, and devotes herself to others, especially the children. Submission to suffering is the moral of these tales and the only evident avenue of salvation and happiness. Especially in the history of Jo March, in *Little Women*, some of these same plot elements are worked out. Tomboy Jo is proud and rebellious, wants to be free, and has exalted ambitions, but she winds up married, thank heaven, to the conventional and middle-aged Professor Bhaer, whose elevated literary taste and scorn for sensational trash is the subject of my epigraph. As a married woman, Jo concludes that "the life I wanted then seems selfish, lonely, and cold to me now."

Whether or not the joyous celebration of marriage and family in *Little Women* is palatable to liberated women now, the novel is still immensely popular with young girls; and the magnitude of Miss Alcott's achievement in this book cannot be exaggerated. The novel was an instant best seller in 1868; it has since gone through hundreds of editions; it has also been translated into scores of foreign languages; and a great many dramas and theatricals have been based on it. Julian Hawthorne, the novelist's son, testified that *Little Women* was a theatrical even before it was a novel: as a girl Louisa May staged a neighborhood version of it, with herself as Jo and Julian himself as Laurie. Of all theatrical versions of it, I should most like to have seen Katherine Cornell as Jo in the London New Theatre production of 1919. Fifty years ago George Jean Nathan said of a 1944 dramatization of the novel that it was "still serviceable theatre, and a felicitous journey out of the hard-boiled present into the lace-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

valentine yesterday." There were even a few radio dramatizations of it: Katharine Hepburn was heard in radio versions twice (in 1933 and 1945), the first time with Oscar Holmolka, John Davis Lodge, and Elliot Reid.

Film and television have continually reinforced sales of the novel. Who can forget the spunky Katharine Hepburn as Jo in the RKO 1933 version directed by George Cukor —a part for which she won the Cannes Film Festival best actress award. In 1949 Mervyn Le Roy directed a film version with June Allyson as Jo, supported by an all-star cast including Janet Leigh, Margaret O'Brien, Elizabeth Taylor, Mary Astor, Peter Lawford, and Rossano Brazzi. The BBC did nine one-hour installments of the novel in 1970; and in 1978 Susan Dey played Jo in a TV movie of the novel, supported by Meredith Baxter Birney, Dorothy McGuire, Robert Young, William Shatner, and Greer Garson. Last year Columbia Pictures released a new film version of the novel starring the not-very-spunky but nevertheless winsome Winona Ryder. This version, produced by Denise DiNovi and directed by Gillian Armstrong, featured Gabriel Byrne, Trini Alvarado, Samantha Mathis, Kirsten Dunst, Claire Danes, Christian Bale, Eric Stoltz, Mary Wickes, and Susan Sarandon.[1]

The ongoing popular success of this nineteenth-century American woman writer has been especially gratifying to feminist literary critics, and one is struck by the sheer number of books and articles about Miss Alcott that have—in the full tide of the women's movement—been regularly appearing these last fifteen years. In this period we have seen new biographies, re-editions of the texts of Miss Alcott's fiction, an unearthing of many unknown and unpublished manuscripts, and many new interpretations of her view of the role of women, her attitude toward marriage, and her account of domesticity and family life. Even so, there is a nervous undertone in much of this criticism: Was Alcott an author acceptable to our time—that is, a writer with authentic feminist credentials? Or did she, wittingly or not, "belittle women"?

I should have thought that Miss Alcott's liberal credentials were beyond cavil. After all, she came from the family of one of the most radical reformers of the age. And the "Little Women Series" gives every evidence of heartily endorsing abolition, temperance, women's suffrage, increased educational and professional opportunities for women, sympathy for the Native American, child labor reform, &c. "Don't shut yourself up in a bandbox because you are a woman," the mother Marmee tells her girls, "but understand what is going on, and educate yourself to take your part in the world's work, for it all affects you and yours."

The problem appears to be Miss Alcott's "privileging," as it were, the domestic scene. Her women do not go abroad as sea captains and business tycoons—invading, that is, the man's sphere. If Jo has a "yearning for a man's freedom," a common recent complaint is that the novel teaches the repression of female passion. Another nuisance is that, if Miss Alcott never married, there still seems no plausible way to recruit her for the lesbian agenda: marriage is the beautiful destiny of all her little women. Finally, to these complaints has been added this fatal objection: that the morality of *Little Women* and its successors is passé because it emphasizes issues of conscience, service, and deference to the claims of society rather than aggressive self-actualization at the expense of the needs of others.

But of course it is the vivacity of Miss Alcott's characters, in their dynamic familial interaction and in their struggle with problems of duty and obligation, that make the March family so perennially appealing. And the solidarity of the little women as they grow up, despite their different personalities, is a model of what sisterhood may

1 In order to capitalize on this new film production, Alfred A. Knopf has reprinted the 1908 Everyman's Library text of *Little Women* and is offering it for $15.95 as a new Borzoi Book. Still photos from the movie adorn the dust jacket.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

come to mean. Marriage is not a panacea, but it is the destiny of most women; and to this fact Miss Alcott naturally subordinated her story.

Even so, after the immense success of this book and its *sequellae*, Louisa May Alcott naturally came to resent the publishers' demand that she produce more and more volumes in the "Little Women Series." She grew tired of her role as "The Children's Friend"; she resented being the purveyor of what she called "moral pap for the young." When her friend LaSalle Corbell Pickett complimented her prose style as "befitting a quiet loving home circle," Miss Alcott protested that her natural ambition was for "the lurid style": "I indulge in gorgeous fancies and wish that I dared inscribe them upon my pages and set them before the public." She claimed that she could not write about her real interests because of what Mr. Emerson or her father might think of her. Such writing would have been regarded as trash by the Brahmin luminaries of Concord and Boston, even as it is by Professor Bhaer.

But, as a matter of fact, Louisa May Alcott *had already* set them before the public in a series of anonymous or pseudonymous dime novels and penny-dreadful mysteries composed before her domestic sentimental successes. In her early years, it turns out, she had subsidized her family by churning out serialized Gothic thrillers with titles like *Pauline's Passion and Punishment*, *V. V.: or, Plots and Counterplots*, *A Marble Woman: or, The Mysterious Model*, *Whispers in the Dark*, *Behind a Mask*, and *The Abbot's Ghost: or, Maurice Treherne's Temptation*. These were tales of intrigue, violence, and revenge, involving wicked dandies, escaped convicts, opium addicts, dissolute seducers, and innocent victims of incest, as well as ravished and ravishing women. By 1862 Miss Alcott was writing novelettes regularly for *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and *The Flag of Our Union*, both successful purveyors of sensational trash.

Complaining about George Sand and George Eliot, G. K. Chesterton once said that Miss Alcott was worthy to be classed with Jane Austen. But

> Jane Austen did not call herself George Austen; nor Louisa Alcott call herself George Alcott. These women refrained from that abject submission to the male sex which we have since been distressed to see; the weak demand for masculine names and for a part in merely masculine frivolities; parliaments, for instance.

But Chesterton did not know that Miss Alcott had authored a great deal of trash under the masculine pseudonym A. M. Barnard. Although the editors Frank Leslie and J. R. Elliott naturally wanted her to write under her own name, she refused. Still, they took anything she wrote and clamored for more. None of this was known until 1943, when Leona Rostenberg discovered Miss Alcott's secret "other life" as the pseudonymous author of wild and lurid Gothic thrillers.

I bring up these matters about the writer's "double life" because of the appearance last month of a hitherto unpublished Alcott Gothic thriller: *A Long Fatal Love Chase.*[2] This is not the first of her potboilers to be issued in hard covers; indeed, Madeleine Stern, Miss Alcott's first scholarly biographer, has long made a cottage industry out of editing and anthologizing them.[3] But *A Long Fatal Love Chase* has not seen publication before now because of the incompleteness of the manuscript.

Evidently Miss Alcott, some time in the

---

2 *A Long Fatal Love Chase*, by Louisa May Alcott, edited by Kent Bicknell; Random House, 242 pages, $21.

3 Four of Ms. Stern's Alcott anthologies are currently available: *Modern Magic*, a Modern Library tie-in with *A Long Fatal Love Chase* (275 pages, $13.50); *Behind a Mask: The Unknown Thrillers of Louisa May Alcott* (Morrow, 281 pages, $23); *A Marble Woman: Unknown Thrillers of Louisa May Alcott* (Avon, 279 pages, $11 paper); and *Louisa May Alcott Unmasked: Collected Thrillers* (Northeastern University Press, 754 pages, $55; $24.95 paper).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mid-1860s, decided to do a modern version of Goethe's *Faust*. She started a manuscript called "A Modern Mephistophiles [sic] or The Fatal Love Chase" but experienced difficulty with her publisher, who thought it too long, morbid, and sensational. She then rewrote and condensed it under the title "Fair Rosamond"; this version remains unpublished, and is now in the collection of the Houghton Library. In the end, Miss Alcott abandoned her thriller for a completely replotted, less lurid story, published anonymously as *A Modern Mephistopheles* (1877).[4]

In both of her Faust stories, there is a demonic villain who preys upon innocent youth. But in the first, now published as *A Long Fatal Love Chase*, the youth is a girl named Rosamond Vivian. To escape her drab life in England, Rosamond vows that "I'd gladly sell my soul to Satan for a year of freedom." She gets her wish when—unknown to her—the satanic Phillip Tempest gambles with her grandfather, wins her at cards, and spirits her away aboard his yacht (after deceiving her with a fake marriage). Cruising from one enchantment to another, Rosamond finally discovers (after her year is up) that—however virile and attractive—Tempest is really a moral monster; he is married to another woman, has kidnapped their son, and has Rosamond constantly watched by a sinister servant who turns out to be a murderer and an escaped convict.

Repelled but still enchanted by Tempest, Rosamond then flees to Paris, is befriended by an actress, and then (when Tempest reappears) she (shorn and dressed as a boy) escapes again. Hiding out in a convent, she attains local fame as the saintly Sister Agnes and comes under the protection of Father Ignatius. Tempest, however, finds her again, corrupts a second priest and impersonates him in the Confessional, and nearly succeeds in imprisoning her forever. Rosamond is adept at escapes, however, and (this time as a governess) takes refuge in the family of a French count, who falls in love and is ready to marry her, when Tempest convinces him that she is insane. Fair Rosamond is then imprisoned in a madhouse. Father Ignatius locates and rescues her, however, and—disguised as father and daughter—they flee to the home of the real Mrs. Tempest, where it is thought Tempest will never look for Rosamond. Obsessed with the virtuous and incorruptible Rosamond, however, Tempest at last finds them. If he can't have her, he intends to kill her. With his yacht he runs down a small craft, aboard which is, he thinks, Father Ignatius. However, it turns out that he has accidentally killed Rosamond instead. At the news that the object of his sexual obsession is dead, Tempest then turns a knife upon himself.

A Long Fatal Love Chase is thus a Gothic thriller of seduction and betrayal, of sexual stalking and predation, of the pitfalls of carnal desire, of imprisonment, madness, and murder. Though it has the rapid pace of a true page-turner, the novel is a tissue of stale clichés lifted out of Monk Lewis and Horace Walpole with elements of the "sensation novels" of Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Mary Elizabeth Braddon. Character is two-dimensional; plotting is episodic; nothing matters except to induce the reader's anxiety by the repetitive perils of pure Rosamond, each of which succeeds the last with formulaic predictability. The Faust motif is forgotten after the first chapter, and the nature of "obsessive love" is, I am afraid, beyond Miss Alcott's ken. She *was* ashamed of this kind of writing, but churning it out paid the bills at a time when nobody else in the family seemed to be able to put together two nickels; and the wild extravagance permitted in this genre provided "Duty's faithful child" with imaginative relief from the humdrum pieties of hearth and home. Hence, she continued to write them in secret, long after *Little Women* had made her a rich, revered, and respectable author.

This publication of *A Long Fatal Love Chase* has no textual validity whatsoever since it

4 *A Modern Mephistopheles* has just been reissued, with a new introduction by Octavia Davis, by Bantam Books (212 pages, $7.95 paper).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is an arbitrary pasting together of two disparate, partly revised, but unfinished manuscripts—the original "Mephistopheles" and the Houghton's "Fair Rosamond." The editor, Kent Bicknell, the principal of a progressive private day school in Sanbornton, New Hampshire, is also the owner of "Mephistopheles"; he purchased it in 1994, when the Alcott heirs put it up for auction. In his note on the text, he remarks that he has "made a few (unacknowledged) emendations to clarify certain portions of the novel, and corrected spelling and punctuation errors." What this means the general reader will never be able to guess; certainly serious scholarship and criticism will find the publication unusable. Meanwhile, we are told that the editor and his wife "share the Concord group's affinity with the East, and make frequent visits to India."

While the editor and his wife are in India, will there *be* serious scholarship and criticism of this sensational piece of trash? Well . . . there will at least be academic criticism. Since the affirmation of marriage and domesticity in the "Little Women Series" is so insufferable to some critics, the latest tack in Alcott criticism is now to resurrect these Gothic thrillers as "her most authentic achievement." These novels are then "psychoanalyzed" as evidence that the author was sexually repressed by the patriarchy and sought release from paternal oppresssion by vivid erotic fantasies of the independent woman who refuses to be victimized by men, comes and goes at will, and personally defines her own existence. Such a heroine is proof that Miss Alcott was in the vanguard, after all, of the movement that produced the modern liberated academic critic. But popular trash is still trash, as Louisa May Alcott knew very well.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mr. Peabody & his Athenaeum

by Daniel Mark Epstein

As I set out to learn the mysterious art of poetry twenty-five years ago, I got along in Baltimore on a weekly salary of forty dollars from part-time work in a jewelry store. I lived in a third-floor walkup apartment on Cathedral Street just off Mount Vernon Square. Once H. L. Mencken occupied a lavish suite of rooms just up the street, overlooking the statuary and fountains of that city park he called the most beautiful in America. There the statue-topped pillar of the nation's first Washington monument passes its shadow over a brick mansion designed by Stanford White, the Greek-revival pediment of the Walters Art Gallery, the columns of the cacophonous Music Conservatory and its venerable, silent neighbor, the George Peabody Library.

I say that I lived in the apartment, but the tiny efficiency in which I slept and wrote in the mornings was hardly a space for living. I lived, really, in the neighborhood of Mount Vernon, which twenty-five years ago still kept the serenity and something of the gentility of a Southern town. In the summer, businessmen crossed the square wearing seersucker suits, bow ties, and straw hats. They shopped downtown in haberdasheries their grandparents had patronized. This was before the real-estate boom and bust filled the streets with brokers, mortgage bankers, and nouveau bureaucrats. Baltimore had a stable middle class that used the public schools. Old women in flower-print dresses and white gloves strolled arm-in-arm on Charles Street in the evening, without fear.

The old city was quiet and lazy, hospitable to ghosts and visions and revery, a perfect place for a poet. I haunted the elegant, slightly seedy streets of Mount Vernon. The deserted marble salon of the Walters Art Gallery was my living room, hung with paintings by Ingres, Botticelli, and Monet, the dusky bar of the Alcazar Hotel was my dining room. And the great Peabody Library was my study.

There is no other library like this in America, or anywhere else excepting the parallel universe of Jorge Louis Borges's fiction. From the cobblestones of the Square you ascend marble steps between fluted double columns, pass under the arch of a classical portico and through the cubic vestibule. The lofty reading room with its low shelves and card catalogues looks out on the green park through three enormous windows. Like ancient censers, eight ceiling lamps hang on chains, illuminating gilt-framed portraits of long-dead librarians.

In the middle of the interior wall, beneath a high archway of dark wood, an unwound pendulum clock hangs silent under the keystone. Through the doorway under the arch you see the white marble floor shining, set with black diamond *tesserae*. As you pass under the arrested pendulum into the open space your eye is drawn up slender columns sixty feet to the latticed skylight with its gilded finials, the pale sky supported by a mountain range of books,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

250,000 books under the roof's painted vaults, whispering, humming a mazy fugue, a bibliographic tower of Babel. Books are shelved to the sky upon five tiers of cast-iron balconies, ladders of lacy grillwork railings running all around the four sides, friezes and columns glittering with rosettes and gold scallops. Double globe lamps hang from the columns on brass stems, lighting oaken library tables in the alcoves of the lower stacks.

Once the globe lamps were gas-fueled, now they are electric. Nothing else here has changed in a century. The collection is non-circulating: these books have never left the building. The space breathes such a dignified air of antiquity it is hard to believe the library has not been here since the founding of the Republic, ours or another state more imposing, more deeply rooted, a Republic of humane letters. But the library opened its doors to the public in 1878, as part of the educational institute founded by George Peabody.

George Peabody's cameo portrait shows the prosperous silver-haired bachelor in his sixties, with mutton-chop whiskers, kind wide-set eyes, broad forehead, a large patrician nose, and a determined mouth that flickers at the corners with wry humor. He was born poor in Danvers, Massachusetts, in 1795. The boy served an apprenticeship to a grocer for five years, then he worked in a drapery shop. Peabody served in the army during the War of 1812, where he met Elisha Riggs, a merchant. In 1815 when the war ended the men set up a dry-goods business in Baltimore under the sign Riggs, Peabody & Co. Peabody, the younger partner, cranked the business up into an enterprise with branches in New York and Philadelphia. By 1829 the firm's name had become Peabody, Riggs & Co.

In Baltimore George Peabody made the small fortune that would serve as the cornerstone for the great one he would pile up later as a financier. The center of the financial world was then London, so Peabody left Baltimore for London in 1837. But he never forgot his home here, or the friends he made in his youth; and he vowed that someday he would return to do something worthy of the city that had given him his start.

No one could have predicted this tyro's success in that treacherous world of bankers and bond factors. By the beginning of the Civil War, George Peabody was so rich that he single-handedly rescued the endangered credit of the U.S. Government in England. Sensitive to the plight of the working class in Dickens's London, the energetic American built more than 40,000 housing units at his own expense, and gave them away to needy families. For this heroic act of charity Queen Victoria offered Mr. Peabody a baronetcy. He declined the title, explaining that it might only come at the expense of his U.S. citizenship, which was dear to him. The philanthropist gave tens of millions of nineteenth-century dollars to Harvard, Yale, Philips Academy, to his home town of Danvers (now Peabody), Massachusetts, and to the South for public education after the war. Thus he became the prototype for other great nineteenth-century philanthropists—Andrew Carnegie himself acknowledged his debt to Peabody's example.

The charity Mr. Peabody is best known for today, however, was his endowment of the cultural institute in Baltimore that bears his name. The founder's letter dictated that the Institute should have four elements: an art gallery, a lecture series, an academy of music, and a library "which I hope may become useful towards the improvement of the moral and intellectual culture of the inhabitants of Baltimore." The fastest growing city in America in 1857 had no university, no library, no art museum—Baltimore was a cultural wasteland. It took the ex-grocery clerk, who hardly had the leisure to read fifty books in his lifetime, to see the need, and provide the basic elements, for a civilization.

I am sitting in an alcove on the ground level of the stack room, under a mountain of books. To my left, shelves upon shelves of huge quarto volumes of *The Victoria His-*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tory of the Counties of England, red bindings, gilt-stamped; to my right the *Calendar of Charter Rolls 1226–1516*. Sadly, some of the bindings have unraveled and pages are crumbling away, turning to dust.

These books and a quarter-million others are more than packages of information. They inhabit space as well as time bearing a very specific spiritual charge, a metaphoric gravity. English history is here, and the history of France and America, Greece, and Rome, as well as the thoughts and memories of millions who have lived and died leaving little above ground but black print on white pages.

I may pull a quarto from the shelf of a hundred tomes on the English Counties, and read at random: in 1713 the headmaster of the Petty school adjoining the Church of Basingstoke, one John James, was indicted for caning a boy to death. I have read one page out of fifty thousand. Think, what a vast human drama abides there, silently, perhaps never to be discovered! In the next alcove is the *War of the Rebellion*, the records of the Union and Confederate armies, in two hundred volumes. All I have ever read about the Civil War is contained in twenty books that cannot begin to convey the dimensions of that national tragedy; yet it is here, figured forth in the heft and breadth of this wall of history, a wall of printed facts I may walk around or enter through a door of pages, but which I may not, in this sanctuary of the human conscience, altogether ignore.

It is very quiet here. There is no one in the library but me. That is, there are no other patrons. Somewhere behind the scenes there is a librarian, and a clerk who will rise from the dust if I call him, and fetch the books I request from the card catalogue. But I am the only reader in the library. That is more often true these days than it was twenty-five years ago when I first sat here looking out the West window on the brick wall of the Conservatory. I remember how surprised I was that the other desks were vacant, and how I wondered whom the library was meant to serve.

I sit at an oak desk with an arabesque book rail. Years ago a librarian whispered to me over my shoulder that John Dos Passos once occupied this desk. "John Dos Passos," she whispered reverently, and then tiptoed back to her hiding place. And I thrilled at the thought: He, Dos Passos, was the last patron the library was meant to serve!

Now there is a little brass plaque on the book rail that says "John Dos Passos, Novelist and Social Historian (1896–1970)/ he spent many hours in research at this desk." I suspect the trustees placed this plaque to honor Dos Passos, not so much for his writings as for his iron perseverance as the library's solitary reader.

He is gone. Am I the last reader in the Peabody Library? I sit alone with this incalculable treasure, like a character in a Jack London story who outlasts the rest, to discover a gold hoard so vast, hypnotic, and remote from civilization that no man who has ever seen it can go home again. The triumphant prospector is destined to add his bones to the pile.

What would Mr. Peabody think of this use, and this disuse, of his books? It is my guess that this very practical man of affairs would not be looking down from Heaven to monitor the turnstile, as if his library were a dance hall or baseball stadium. Mr. Peabody knew about commerce, and he had a feeling for culture—and he was not about to confuse the one thing with the other. His founding letter of February 12, 1857, is quite specific in its description of the sort of library he had in mind:

> An extensive Library, to be well furnished in every department of knowledge, and of the most approved literature, which is to be maintained *for the free use of all persons who may desire to consult it* . . . it should consist of the best books on every subject . . . *to satisfy the researches of students who may be engaged in the pursuit of knowledge not ordinarily obtained in the private libraries of the country*. It should be guarded and preserved from abuse . . . *it shall not be constructed upon the plan of a circulating library*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The emphasis is mine. The founder understood that circulating libraries serve their own democratic purposes, not to be confused with the function of a bona fide research library or Athenaeum, whose volumes not only store information but represent, as significant vessels in hallowed space, the memories and impressions of humankind.

Peabody himself did not have the education to create such an Athenaeum, and knew he would not live to see it. So he charged the trustees and the provost Nathaniel Holmes Morison with instructions to procure the best books "*no matter what their age or cost*, for scholarly research and reference in the arts and sciences."

Now what this means, in effect, is that if you are a budding dramatist, or a critic interested in the Restoration comedy of manners; if you should decide, on a bright summer morning, that you would like a look at William Congreve's first play, *The Old Bachelor*, and ring for the shelf clerk and give him your order from the dusty card catalogue, in ten minutes he will descend in the rattling elevator with your book: *The Old Batchelour*, by William Congreve, 1694. That's right, 1694, the year after the play was produced in London under John Dryden's supervision. Holding the original text in your hands, turning those foxed pages, you can almost hear the dry laughter of the Cavaliers. The book is only three hundred years old. Columna Franciscus's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* was published in Venice in 1499, Paracelsus's *Works* in Geneva, 1658. Are you interested in Francis Bacon? You shall have his *The historie of the raigne of King Henry the Seventh* as it was first published in London in 1622, or the first translation into French, done in Paris five years later.

Most of these books were available after the Civil War in reprints at only a fraction of the cost of the first editions. But money was no object. Mr. Peabody's purpose was to gather books that had made history and first recorded the thoughts and passions of humankind, in the belief that a book is something more than a locus of data, paper, glue, and ink; a book has supersensible power, and a great collection draws down a resonance endowing the reader of any book in it with special faculties of understanding.

If you are an aspiring author and want a shot of Henry James, you shall have *The Wings of the Dove* as it first appeared, in two volumes, in 1902. During three months when I was twenty-four years old, I spent an hour a day reading that novel, parsing the master's labyrinthine sentences in the shadow of 250,000 books, most of them older, unwilling to let go of any paragraph until I had understood Milly Theale and Merton Densher as well as I could. What higher tribute could I pay this author, than focusing on his book to the exclusion of those other classics clamoring for attention, eager to comment, to argue, to be heard?

And if you are John Dos Passos, perhaps the greatest epic novelist of America's Empire, you have the substance and spirit of human history as the grist for your mill.

Dos Passos was a passionate defender of individualism, all the more passionate because he nourished a diligent social conscience. In the 1960s he was still fashionable, the subject of a flattering essay by Jean-Paul Sartre. When I was in high school my friends and I read Dos Passos's *U.S.A.* trilogy in lively paperback editions illustrated by Reginald Marsh, epic novels in which a host of diverse characters play out the drama of their lives against the panorama of history from 1900 to the 1930s.

He was our Homer, without a hero. His carefully observed hoboes, soldiers, waitresses, and financiers are always measuring the scope of individual freedom against the rule of law and the needs of the *polis* as a whole, i.e. *one another*. The protagonist of this sprawling narrative is no single character but the whole ensemble, the aggregate soul of America. Dos Passos saw his work as following the English tradition that begins with Chaucer and ripens in Shakespeare, Fielding, and Dickens, a literature dedicated to the description of people not only as in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dividuals but as eccentrics, bound to suffer one another's company on the hard pilgrimage of life on this earth.

If today's novelist serves any social purpose—apart from perfecting *objets d'art* and advancing human perception—it consists in such luminous study of individuals and their affairs as will inspire a reader to understand men and women unlike himself. It is thus we begin to comprehend society as a whole. Of Chaucer, Dos Passos writes in praise of his "down-to-earth knowledge of vulgar reality, the gift for jocose narrative, the appetite for freedom, the sharp satire mellowed by fellow feeling for a great many varieties of men."

Our English word "individual" comes from the Latin *individuus*, not divisible, of one essence. As Walt Whitman knew, the individual is *individuus*, paradoxically, because he is of one essence with all people.

At the bottom of the well of the Peabody Library, Dos Passos mused, darkly, on the individual's fate in a society based on industrial mass production. "Life has become so cut up into specialized departments and vocabularies, so hard to understand and to see as a whole, that most people won't even try. Even people of first-rate intelligence get so walled up in the particular work they are doing that they never look outside of it." He recalled Ralph Waldo Emerson:

> Man is not a farmer, or a professor, or an engineer, but he is all . . . There is One Man—present to all particular men only partially, or through one faculty; you must take the whole society to find the whole man.

And then Dos Passos dipped his pen to write novels upon Emerson's advice, books that would deserve a place in the Athenaeum that nurtured his vision of the whole man.

This is the novelist's consummate role, to reunite the fragments of the subdivided social state in his vision of the whole, the original unit, the fountain of power. The celebration of family histories and egocentric memoirs is useful and salutary, but it must not become the foundation of an aesthetic. These must not be taken as the ideal of literary art. Nor is it art that restricts itself to elaborating any single viewpoint, of the disenfranchised, the dispossessed, the bookish, or the privileged. This is a form of journalism that has its own standards of excellence. But it must not be confused with the art of Henry James, Ralph Ellison, or Virginia Woolf, whose vision contrives to relate elements of society that have lost sight of one another.

I have heard the solemn critics say, again and again during the last decade, that there is no story, there are only stories; there is no truth, there are only truths; that there is no human character, there are only characters. These deconstuctionist slogans may or may not pass muster in the metaphysics seminar. But when Gabriel García Márquez succeeds in appealing to a world-wide audience, reuniting diverse readers in the clear light of a fictional universe, it is because he has told *the* story all can share, because he has discovered *the* truth that is the ground of human understanding between reader and writer, because he has revealed an essence of human character that is universal. Insofar as J. M. Coetzee deserves his laurels as a novelist, it is not because he bears witness to the persecution of his people—for this he deserves credit as a journalist. He is important as a novelist to the extent that he has told the story of his family within the larger context of human history, with irony, including characters unlike his own, not monsters, but equally human. It is significant that the greatest American novel about the Holocaust was written, not by a Jew, but by the Southern gentile William Styron. And the genius of *Sophie's Choice* was to show that the tragedy of the Holocaust did not begin and end with the Jews in Europe, but could be re-enacted by three young people, more and less Jewish, in the microcosm of an American rooming house.

I would guess that Mr. Peabody, with the clairvoyance granted to angels, is pleased

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with the use of his library. He sees who comes and goes, what they read, and what they think. Maybe ten people will come here in a day, or maybe one person in ten days who is more perceptive than ten taken together. With every Dos Passos come a hundred critics of the author; for every great novelist there are a hundred historians whose lucubrations on the recent past will inspire the next epic novelist, and so on. Add a few thousand thoughtful readers and there you have a civilization, which is a society conscious of itself (much like a person is conscious), of its history, thoughts and feelings, the inter-relations of its sundry parts.

Mr. Peabody understood that to have a civilization you must have an Athenaeum, just as to have a school of fish you must have a body of water. In your pond or lake you may have fish or you may not, but without water you surely will have none. This magical library, in this charmed space, was designed to be used by a few men and women who can learn how to live in it. This is the necessary environment for private education, the encounter between a person and a book. It is free and private. That is why there are so few tables and chairs. That is why it is always so quiet. Mr. Peabody endowed not only the books and the cast-iron architecture. He endowed the silence in perpetuity, in a space where time stands still. Here the individual can begin to locate his soul in the sprawling galaxy of human experience symbolized by the books on the towering shelves.

Now there is a great concern in Baltimore, as in all major cities, about the decline in literacy. It is no longer possible for most children to learn to read and write in the public schools. Since the end of the Vietnam War public education has descended to a level so pathetic that even the cruelest satire cannot exaggerate it. Bells ring in schools where there are no textbooks, no light bulbs, no windows. Children cannot use the lavatories for fear of being robbed and beaten there, having their heads flushed in the toilets. Increase of funding is fruitless where incompetent teachers are not fired nor recalcitrant students expelled, where the "C" grade is given for failure, and teachers no longer routinely correct grammar or spelling, for fear of injuring their students' self-esteem. This has come about largely because of a debasing of academic standards to flatter the lowest common denominator, so that no teacher or student should appear more intelligent than another. The passion for a utopian equality has caused originality of thought and excellence of scholarship to be vilified, and a bestial uniformity to be valued above conscious individuality.

For my generation, the decline of the public schools is especially frightening because we remember the system in its golden age. Democracy giveth, and Democracy taketh away. New Deal politicians pumped up funding for circulating libraries and public schools in the Thirties. The electorate's passion for mass education reached its sublime expression in the G.I. Bill of Rights of 1944, financing higher education for millions of veterans in an era when colleges had not yet bartered away their standards of excellence. That was real progress. The sons and daughters of these middle-class alumni went to the public schools where their parents taught, in the city and suburbs. Schoolteaching was a respected profession, the only one besides nursing that favored women, and women enriched it beyond measure.

American public schools were never more effective than in the 1950s and early 1960s. They had sufficient if not generous funding, serious educators, and, most important, a strong basis of support in the communities they served. That was the golden age. Never was education for the common man, white and black, more widespread and high-minded in this country—certainly not in the 1920s or 1930s. As for the nineteenth century, let the mistier sentimentalists glorify the one-room schoolhouse and its knuckle-rapping schoolmarms. Most boys and girls too poor to attend private school, like George Peabody, went to work.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yes, post–World War II America enjoyed the apogee of mass education and witnessed unprecedented literacy, and we thought it would last for ever. But in the late Sixties federal and state bureaucracy melted down the community-based public schools at the bidding of an electorate determined to drag the best students down to the level of the worst. They have succeeded, horribly.

What is to be done? Without mass education our universal suffrage will surely lead us to demagoguery or tyranny. "When society has entered on this downward progress," wrote the English historian Thomas Babington Macauley in the 1850s,

> either civilization or liberty must perish. Either some Caesar or Napoleon will seize the reins of government with a strong hand or your Republic will be as the Roman Empire was in the fifth; with this difference . . . your Huns and Vandals will have been engendered within your own country by your own institutions.

What shall we do for the Baltimore schools? They need books. Shall we sell the rare books in the Peabody Library at auction? Here is a Double Elephant Folio and Octavo set of Audubon's *Birds of America* worth at least half a million dollars. Think how many social-studies textbooks and computers the schools could buy with all that money. And then, when the library is empty, see what a splendid indoor stadium it would make for wrestling and gymnastics!

"You will in such season of adversity as I have described," says the prophet Macauley, "do things which will prevent prosperity from returning; you will act like people in a year of scarcity who devour all the seed corn . . ."

By the mid-1960s, the Peabody endowment had so far dwindled that the trustees, in dismay and desperation, offered the Athenaeum to the City's library system; in 1966 the George Peabody Library became a department of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. And as surely as night follows the day, the City promptly announced a strategy to auction off the rare books, shuffle the rest into the public library system, and convert the building into a study hall for high-school students.

Such a cry of pain and outrage arose from the scholarly community thirty years ago as has never been heard since, and the City's plan never materialized. A fund-raising campaign to restore the building, install air conditioning, and rebind a few hundred books carried the library through the Seventies. But as the City's budget tightened, the Pratt decided it could no longer justify the expense of the Peabody Library. In 1982 it became a department of the special collections division of the Johns Hopkins Library. The transfer agreement states the university's desire to honor Mr. Peabody's original intent.

So, for the time being, the library is safe. We shall not sell the books at auction, or turn the stack room into a skating rink. But look how close we came to that folly only five years before I made the library my study! Had it not been for a handful of scholars, who understood the Athenaeum's intangible value well enough to explain it, appealing to the public's highest instincts, then that sanctum in which I found my voice would have been no more than a romantic legend, like the libraries of Alexandria and the Palatine.

But will the academic dons and cashiers of the Johns Hopkins University have the integrity and the providential foresight to maintain the library as they have promised? I would like to say that this is certain, but I cannot. Thirty years ago, the Hopkins had a top-notch classics department, whose members were dedicated to the study of Greek and Latin authors and ancient history. Scholars like these defended the Peabody Library when the Baltimore City bureaucrats armed themselves to plunder and despoil it. In the 1980s the Hopkins classics department was virtually dissolved because of poor enrollment—a sad concession for a private university, to bow to the economics of mass education. When the accountants

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

explain, as they must, that the maintenance of the Peabody Library for a few hundred eccentrics is less cost-effective than a new computer system that will be used by thousands, who will stand up to defend the library?

Who will be left, in the next millennium, to defend the idea of a civilization? Not, surely, the graduates of Baltimore's public high schools, not unless some of the more curious children are drawn to the Athenaeum or someplace else where there are books and an atmosphere of reverence for their human contents. Does any thinking person believe there is *less* need for a great library today than there was in 1857?

What would Mr. Peabody say and do, if we could have him and his old fortune (at 7 percent interest) restored to us in the year 2000? Strolling up Charles Street in his frock coat and looking around him, he would doubtless be pleased at the sight of the Walters Art Gallery and the sounds of the Baltimore Symphony, flowers from the seeds he planted. Surely this is progress, he would say. Then of course he would want to know about the schools, and we would have to tell him.

And what would Mr. Peabody do with his millions, in the best interest of society and civilization? It stands to reason that he would do what he did in the nineteenth century, when he gave roughly equal amounts to found the Peabody Institute and to jump-start public education in the ruined South. For a free society is not monolithic—it depends upon a harmonious interaction among its diverse constituents. Leave it to the rags-to-riches philanthropist, who has known society from the bottom up, to understand this truth: civilization may flourish or rot from the top down, but in a democracy it can only endure by consent of an educated electorate. Five poets at work in the Peabody Library and a thousand readers studying their verses may constitute a civilization, in time, given the time. But if a half-million others cannot understand print on the page or the humanizing value of poetry, these will burn down the library sooner or later, in a rage over what they cannot understand, furious over the beauty that has been denied them.

The philanthropist, his judgment none the worse for a century's holiday among angels, would divide his fortune as before, between a research institution for the few, and public education for the many. By public education I do not mean the City public school system as we know it. I mean only to distinguish public education from the sort of private education that goes on between a reader and a book in the Athenaeum. Mr. Peabody was a realist, not a man to throw good money after bad. He would grant his money only to schools, public or private, maintaining standards of excellence and the power to fire inept teachers and expel disruptive pupils: parochial schools and "private" schools open to needy students through scholarship programs. This is the best that any philanthropist can do, at present, to foster literacy in the public. Perhaps in the future a literate minority will once again persuade the electorate that schools funded by the public best serve the public when they recognize individual intelligence, reward academic excellence.

Of course Mr. Peabody would not leave Baltimore until he had fastened down his Athenaeum, the constant source of human progress and enlightenment. He would round up a posse of conservators to rebind his crumbling books and oil their leather hinges. He would telephone an architect and contractors and hire them to build a new tower nearby for a hundred thousand new old books that would bring the Athenaeum a little closer to the twenty-first century. Then with a smile of modest satisfaction, the philanthropist might return to that blessed world of light where questions have easy answers and virtue is rewarded, knowing that all he could ever do for civilization he has done.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Imperial Berlin revisited

by William Jay Smith

Poets are proverbially poor and usually consigned to garrets but the French poet Jules Laforgue (1860–1887) was the exception. He was not rich, but he lived like a prince in a royal palace and there produced in his short life work that left its mark on the literature of his own country and an even greater mark on later generations of writers in England and America. Through the intervention of his friends, the writer Paul Bourget and the art collector and critic Charles Ephrussi (who may have served as one of the models for Proust's Charles Swann), Laforgue went in 1881 to Berlin as French reader to the Empress Augusta. The Empress, a descendant of Catherine the Great of Russia, having grown up in Goethe's Weimar, despised most things German and spoke only French. It was Laforgue's duty to read to her twice a day from French books and newspapers. He occupied a large high-ceilinged, elaborately furnished apartment, with olive-green walls, ebony woodwork, and dark wall hangings, on the ground floor of the Palace of the Princesses on the Unter den Linden, where he had fires in every room and was looked after by his own servant. "Opposite me is the Royal Guard House," he wrote to a friend, "all military bands and pointing cannon. On my left, the Opera and the Palace. On my right, a mass of columns and statues. I have five windows looking out in all directions. I can see nothing but monuments. And officers with pale monocles." He resigned his position and left Berlin in the winter of 1886 to travel to London, where he married Leah Lee, a young woman with whom he had studied English. The couple returned to Paris, where Laforgue died of tuberculosis on August 20, 1887, four days after his twenty-seventh birthday.

Laforgue's palace routine was indeed boring and boredom became one of his favorite subjects, but it allowed him to produce two volumes of poetry, with a third ready for publication at the time of his death. In his last and greatest poems, published posthumously, he was among the first to make effective use of *vers libre*. An exhibition of Impressionist paintings in Berlin at the Gurlitt Gallery prompted Laforgue to write the first, and still the best, essay on Impressionism. Laforgue was a master of irony, and it is, of course, supremely ironic that, while quartered in a palace, he should be the first poet to introduce into poetry all the sordid details of modern life. It was this aspect of Laforgue that T. S. Eliot took over, sometimes literally, in his early work, and that has influenced much of poetry since. Laforgue's book of tales (*Moralités légendaires*), with its blend of parody and high seriousness, served as a point of departure for James Joyce and subsequently for many other writers and dramatists. During his five-year sojourn, Laforgue was constantly taking notes on court life and on the city. He incorporated many of these into his poems and stories; others he kept for the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

book on Berlin that he had planned for some time. That book, *Berlin, la cour et la ville*, not published until 1922, is still little known even in France.

Laforgue has been called the French Keats, and like Keats, in his poems and letters, he made full use of his senses. Writing of Berlin as well, he brings forcefully to bear all his sensory perceptions. Many people have written about imperial Berlin but no one has told us better than Laforgue exactly what it was like to be there. He not only sees the military presence in his brilliant description of the goings-on at the Royal Guard House below his windows but he also hears that presence in the clicking of spurs in the palace hallways and the scraping of a saber along the pavement.

He tells us how everything looked at the Opera Ball but also how it smelled—of a mixture of *eau de cologne* and the floor wax that had been very generously applied. He shows us exactly what the Unter den Linden was like at every hour of the day and night: he tells of the poverty of the morning hours with young women in their cheap hats, the loads of red cabbage going by, the milk carts with their teams of muzzled dogs; he records the flashing change of the guard at noon and the bright bourgeois activity of the afternoon, followed by the still evening when the avenue became a hallway for the glittering officers moving toward the Royal Palace for the court balls. He paints a startling picture of night on Friedrichstrasse with bloated Prince George in his general's uniform strolling along in pursuit of his pleasures with his high-sprung, finely balanced carriage following behind him; with the prostitutes bending over the gutter to eat their hot sausages. He shows us close-up the shop windows, the music halls, the beer gardens. He reports what people wore, what they ate, what they smoked. He gives us the very texture of life, and no detail is too insignificant to escape his attention. On the crushed top hat of an old coachman he sees attached a "new patent leather cockade that caught the sunlight like a black diamond." And he glimpses, in passing, the polychrome china parrots on the palm branches in the Empress's little conservatory. The effect of the whole is that of one of those Impressionist paintings Laforgue admired, where all the bright individual brush strokes add up to a scene that is singularly alive and moving.

In his tales Laforgue made imaginative use of the material that he presents here in straightforward terms. In "Salomé," in particular, we recognize the presence of the German court. "Salomé" is a parody of Flaubert's "Hérodias," but while Flaubert found the sources of his tale in the library, Laforgue looked around him and put down what he saw. The Tetrarchic Palace, hewn out of black basalt, is the royal Schloss, that monumental structure that Laforgue describes exactly in *Berlin*. The Tetrarch Emerald-Archetypas is modeled on Emperor William I. Without his close view of the Prussian officers around him Laforgue could never have described the Princes of the North so precisely: "girded, pomaded, gloved, and uniformed, with full-flowing beards and parted hair (with locks curved down around their temples to give tone to the profiles stamped on their medallions) . . . waiting, one hand holding the helmet on the right hip while the other—with the prancing gesture of a stallion catching a whiff of gunpowder—fidgeted with the saber on the left one."

In 1871 the Prussian nobility composed less than one percent of the urban population but it wielded immense influence. The aristocracy completely dominated the guards stationed in Berlin and Potsdam; in the officer corps of one regiment alone there were thirteen princes and ten counts. The cavalry regiments boasted thirty-four princes and fifty-one counts. The military, thus closely linked to the court, was everywhere and its power pervaded every aspect of life. Half the population of Berlin, Laforgue observes, seemed to be in uniform, and the half that wasn't dressed as if it were. The city was living, he says, in a "slight state of siege."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In 1986, on a hot summer day like the one Laforgue had described a century before, I visited Berlin for the first time. The city, split down the middle by a wall that cut through every segment like a jagged bolt of lightning, was, it seemed to me, living under a full state of siege.

In Lichterfelde in the American sector of West Berlin, the Royal Central Cadet School, where Prussian officers had been trained, largely destroyed by bombs, was then occupied by U.S. forces as Andrews Barracks. The sentimental frieze in the Field Marshals' Hall there, which for Laforgue depicted the spirit of the German soldier proud to place "his huge hand on the Parisian volcano," was gone. The main stop of the tourist bus in East Berlin was the mammoth Soviet War Memorial in Treptow Park, where five thousand Soviet soldiers were buried, and where, in an adjacent beer garden, a band played, very much as it would have in Laforgue's time. The city that was striving at the turn of the century to be a world capital had indeed become one, the capital of a divided world that was all one armed camp.

On the Unter den Linden, under ragged linden trees, a gift of the Hungarians set out in neat pathetic rows, a few earnest, ill-clad figures wandered as if on a dusty, rarely used stage set. Where the lively Café Bauer once stood at the corner of Unter den Linden and Friedrichstrasse the Linden Corso Restaurant served up mammoth portions of bad food in a dark cavernous interior. Nearby was a bookstore stocked with pristine mounds of unsold copies of Lenin's works and little else.

On the terrace outside the Palace of the Princesses, which had been restored as the Opera Café, a small group of beer-drinkers was seated under umbrellas. No one was inside when I entered what had been Laforgue's apartment. The café consisted of one large, low-ceilinged room with bright orange walls, tiny tables, and a grand piano in one corner. On the windowsills were pots of schefflera and mother-in-law's tongue.

Pushing aside the thin white curtains, I gazed across at the Royal Guard House (then, as now, called the New Guard House). Beyond a sea of parked cars, I watched a squad of East German guardsmen file from the neighboring Arsenal. With the familiar goose-step they made their way, propelled like mechanical dolls, toward the guard house, inside of which the East German authorities had lit an eternal flame to honor "the victims of fascism and militarism."

On the eve of V-E Day this year, I again visited the Unter den Linden. The interior of the Palace of the Princesses has been completely remodeled and rechristened the Opera Palace. It contains four restaurants; Laforgue's apartment has been given a glitzier look, a long bar, and a raised platform in one corner on which a jazz combo holds forth. Below the windows the only signs of military activity were police cars lined up on both sides of the street in preparation for a demonstration by leftist students at Humboldt University next to the New Guard House. On the iron railing of the university was a poster showing a Soviet soldier smiling and holding cupped in his hands the decapitated head of a statue of Hitler. In the middle of the street was a large metal barge capped with grass and trees put there by the Greens, the words "The desert is in us" painted on its side. No guards stood outside the New Guard House, the interior design of which has been restored to what it was during the Weimar Republic. An enlarged bronze replica of a statue by Käthe Kollwitz, *Mother with Her Dead Son*, rests in the center and below it the words "To the victims of war and tyranny."

I found another vivid reminder of that tyranny opposite Humboldt University between the Opera and the Old Library at the center of Opera Square, which Laforgue used to pass each day on his way to read to the Empress. I saw several young Germans gathered in a circle, kneeling at times and all gazing intently below them. What they were looking at I had been looking for; I walked over to join them. There below us was the memorial to the bonfire of May 10,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1933, when thousands of Nazi sympathizers burned some twenty thousand books considered decadent or un-German. Entitled *Library*, the monument is the work of the Israeli sculptor Micha Ullman. It consists of an underground room lined with exactly enough stark white empty shelves to hold the number of books burned, among them works by German writers Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, and Albert Einstein, as well as others by Ernest Hemingway, Jack London, and Marcel Proust. As I gazed down, a shaft of sunlight like a torch lit up one side of the empty library with a haunting effect. It accentuated a terrible emptiness akin to that of the unearthed white solitary cells below the Gestapo headquarters, where prisoners were kept and tortured. In the pavement beside the Old Library, two plaques explain the occasion of the memorial. On one are inscribed the words of the German poet Heinrich Heine, commenting on book-burning in 1820: "This is only a prelude. Where they burn books, in the end they will also burn people."

I returned to the square on V-E Day and found that rain had fallen as it had fifty years ago when Russian troops entered Berlin. It had clouded over the glass window so that *Library* below was just a blur but still several Germans struggled to make out the empty shelves. It was as if nature was obscuring for them what, even with the greatest vigilance, was difficult to face.

Since the day fifty years ago when Berliners came up from their cellars to examine the ruins of their city, they have been trying to fill in the empty spaces among the mounds of rubble, but much emptiness remains even after all the years of clearing, construction, and reconstruction. Berlin is the only city in the world the heart of which is empty, and in a city harboring so many ghosts, it is perhaps natural that this emptiness, which extends physically and psychologically so far, will not be easy to fill. Potsdammer Platz, the bustling center of imperial Berlin, from whose imposing station, the train, the second built in Germany, took the Emperor and the Empress regularly to the Babelsberg Palace in Potsdam, is now a great wasteland, the vacancy of which has been accentuated by the removal of the wall. Before the government returns here finally between 1998 and 2000, this area is to be replaced by a huge business complex dominated by Daimler-Benz and Sony, which will make this its European headquarters. It is a bitter irony that the two allies defeated in World War II should today erect such a monumental display of economic world power in a wasteland adjacent to Hitler's Bunker. Nearby, below the remains of the Wertheim department store, the vacant underground stretches are being addressed in a different manner. The store's vaults have been turned into a disco called Tresor, where the young gather after midnight to dance to "techno" music while strobe lights play on metal grilles and empty deposit boxes.

The Palace of William I on the Unter den Linden was, as Laforgue described it, of "that dull ocher found almost everywhere, and which to the new arrival seems the dominant tone of the capital." Only the Emperor and the Empress, with four or five attendants, lived there, the Emperor on the ground floor, where from his famous corner window he stood at attention every day at noon when the guard filed by. Their private apartments were "filled to overflowing with an odd assortment of rather inelegant Christmas presents; the large number of marble vases and little modern tables and chairs is especially deplorable."

The building, with its overflowing Christmas presents, no longer exists, but it came to mind when I discovered that modern Berlin seems to be making a fetish of wrapping its empty buildings and offering them up as presents to itself. The first such wrapping occurred in 1993. East German authorities in 1950 had blown up what remained of the Royal Palace and replaced it in the mid-1970s with the Palace of the Republic, an ugly gigantic rectangle of what looks like burnt-sienna isinglass, now condemned because of the asbestos it contains.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Catherine Feff, a French artist, painted on vinyl one hundred feet high and three hundred feet wide a *trompe l'oeil* façade that was hung over the Palace of the Republic on scaffolding donated by the Thyssen steelworks; it reproduced exactly the four-story ocher façade with the windows and balustrades of the original design of the seventeenth-century architect Andreas Schlüter. For several months thousands of people flocked behind the façade to a special exhibition entitled "The Castle?" Several businessmen sponsoring the project put forward a proposal that would cost a billion marks (about six hundred million dollars) to tear down the Palace of the Republic and replace it by at least the exterior of the old Schloss. They wanted to make a gift of this exterior to the government; the government would then be free to build whatever it found appropriate inside. It is significant that the title of the exhibition was followed by a question mark: when the *trompe-l'oeil* wrapping came down, no decision had been taken regarding the castle. And apparently the question mark still holds, for the glaring Communist brown-glass box remains, dominant as ever, empty and unusable.

Berlin gave itself an even greater present with what was called *Wrapped Reichstag, Project for Berlin*. At the Radisson Plaza, the old Communist Palast Hotel overlooking the Spree where I stayed, the wording was slightly different. Anticipating a huge tourist turnout for the June event, an announcement in my room called attention to "the ultimate cultural event in 1995: The German Reichstag wrapped up by Christo." That "wrapping-up," which the German Bundestag had voted 292 to 228 to allow Christo to undertake, has been described in endless detail in the international press from what Christo and his collaborator, or as she now insists on being called, his co-artist wife, Jeanne-Claude, term their "software period," when Christo did all the sketches, maquettes, and engravings that were put on sale on the Kurfürstendamm to finance the project until the "hardware period" when the wrapping, with a million square feet of silver polypropylene fabric and nine miles of blue rope, was finally carried out. What has not been told about the project, which became a boon to the economy of East Germany, where entire towns were employed in the manufacture of the fabric, the thread, and the rope, is how it came about. The story making the rounds of Berlin when I was there, although apocryphal perhaps, may bear repeating. In 1971 Mike Cullen, an American long resident in Berlin, sent Christo a postcard of the Reichstag, suggesting that he come to wrap it. Christo replied indignantly that he was not interested and that he did not take suggestions; he alone decided what to wrap. When it was brought to his attention that Georgi Dimitroff (1882–1949), the co-founder of the Bulgarian Communist party and later president of the Bulgarian People's Republic, had been falsely accused of setting the Reichstag fire, Christo, himself a Bulgarian, changed his mind and decided to offer the wrapped Reichstag to Berlin and to the world, as well as to the memory of his compatriot. Also perhaps as a sixtieth-birthday present to himself and his wife.

Before the Reichstag wrapping could begin, a final obstacle had to be dealt with: the nest of a falcon was discovered above the building's main entrance. The Bird Protection Association, called in for consultation, finally reluctantly allowed the nest to be moved to the roof of the Palace of the President across the way.

It was fitting that a falcon should be at the center of such a monumental undertaking because that other bird of prey, the eagle, was the omnipresent emblem of Prussian power. Jules Laforgue, who had such clear premonitions of where that militaristic emblem would take Berlin, would have appreciated the irony of the discovery as well as the total irony of a project that Christo himself has called "absolutely irrational, almost irresponsible," an elaborate present in questionable taste that only he and Jeanne-Claude really wanted in the first place.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Poems *by Frederick Morgan, William Logan & Charles Tomlinson*

Rain

Rain, all-enduring rain
that afternoon in the country cemetery:
a dripping, placid rain,
a rain intended to stay.

Dull, quiet fields all about us.
A closed horizon.
Tricklings of rain on the gravestones,
the freshening smell of grass.

The dead were there beneath us—
who they had been didn't matter.
Future and past didn't matter,
not even our two dear selves.

I kissed you on the lips then
(there were rain-drops on your forehead)
and you drew your body closer
as we made that moment ours.

—*Frederick Morgan*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nothing

Nothing, and naked—
thus he confronted the day
mistrusting all motives
but sure of his way.

Released from the past,
he contained it within
as structure and bone
of the men he had been.

At ease in his choices,
knowing evil and good,
might he now bring to focus
what it was he understood?

For he understood *something*,
on his windy plateau,
that quickened his heartbeat
and made his eyes glow.

—*Frederick Morgan*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Elegy

Tamela James (1967–1994)

When they die young, we have no cause to mourn
the loss. We suffer losses every day.
I saw your ghost amid the alien corn.

Standing there, deaf to us all, it seemed to scorn
the racket of the mockingbird and jay.
When they die young, we have no cause to mourn.

How could your moth-balled wedding dress adorn
the rose-decked coffin like a sunburnt May?
I saw your ghost. Amid the alien corn,

it crossed the broken fields. The moon's bent horn
hung over the prayers—I had no words to pray.
When they die young, we have no cause to mourn

the lives they would have led, the pages torn
across the calendar of dates unfinished. Stay—
I saw your ghost amid the alien corn.

How much it cost, that terrible beauty born
amid the ruin of our cold clichés.
When they die young, we have no cause to mourn.
I saw your ghost amid the alien corn.

—*William Logan*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Swans

Two swans swim up the river side by side:
She forages on ahead, he keeps behind.
They mate for life and both are of one mind,
Though separately seeking what they need.

He, who has been alone too long, in one
Muscular sweep annuls the space between,
To join her down the brown, the gray, the green
Flux their whole life has been lived out on.

They ride the pull, steadying their gleam
Of white on the hurrying, multi-colored water,
Against the light-and-shadow's flickering stir,
Balanced between the arriving and departing stream.

—Charles Tomlinson

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Theater

Art & tyranny in London

by Mark Steyn

A year or so after the *fatwa* on Salman Rushdie, I found myself opining that a senior Conservative MP had been "wrong to criticize Rushdie on political grounds for his comparison of Britain with Nazi Germany and for his crude insults for Mrs. Thatcher. But they're certainly contemptible on literary grounds." At the time Rushdie responded by saying that "Mr. Steyn may think it bad form to get angry about racial bigotry, but he ought at least to study what a man actually said before calling him 'contemptible.' " For my enlightenment, he then repeated what he'd actually said: "Britain isn't Nazi Germany. The British Empire wasn't the Third Reich. But in postwar Germany attempts were made by many people to purify German thought and the German language of the pollution of Nazism. But British thought has never been cleansed of the filth of imperialism."

I haven't thought about those lines in five years. Reading them again, I'm struck by the oddly Nazi-esque tone—all that "purifying" of "thought" and "cleansing" of "filth." Since Rushdie is a writer, one must assume he has selected his words with care. Granted that the passage pre-dates the Ayatollah's death warrant, the sentiments still sound odd coming from a man who has chosen to defend himself on the ground of free speech: you cannot advocate the purification of thought and the cleansing of a particular filth, and then object when some wackoes in Teheran decide they want to purify the world of *your* thoughts and *your* filth. Rushdie likes children's fables and his is the little boy whose wish is granted—and how. For most of the Eighties, Rushdie did his best to get attention. He bandied about expressions like "police state," he called Mrs. Thatcher "Mrs. Torture." And, in his hysterical excoriation of contemporary Britain, he so devalued his own currency—language—as to render himself impotent. When at last he was taken seriously, it was, unfortunately for him, from a most unexpected quarter.

It's not easy being an artist in an enfeebled, dog-eared democracy. In London, in any given week, you're never far from some play or other addressing this most un-pressing of issues. Good grief, they're still doing *Baal* by Brecht (at the Man in the Moon) about the alienated poet refusing to conform to society. There's a whole gaggle of 'em in *Bloody Poetry* (at the Judi Dench Theatre), a new piece by Howard Brenton, a long-time flayer of the British state from his insulated bunker in subsidized theater: this time he's got Byron, Shelley, and the gang sitting around exploring the role of the artist and his obligation to spark revolution in men's minds. The role-of-the-artist question is as ubiquitous in British theater as the backstage musical is on Broadway—even though, to the average Briton, it's an easy enough question to answer: what is the place of the artist in society? Why, it's as the last item on the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

evening news just before they show the Australian soap opera. Once upon a time, the closing story on the TV bulletins would be a labored "funny" about the windsurfing granny or a skateboarding duck. Nowadays, it's the well-I-never art item. Here's the actress Tilda Swinton in a piece of performance art called *The Maybe*—she lies down asleep in a glass case for eight hours (the first Equity member to be working while she's resting), and you stand there watching on the off chance she'll have to go out for a pee and thus raise the fascinating question of whether, when she leaves the room, does the "art" do so also, or does it remain in the empty glass case? Here's the homoerotic double-act Gilbert and George, this year exhibiting art made from their feces. Ever since Duchamp inaugurated this particular school, most folks felt about the toilet in art the way Noël Coward did about television: it's for being on, not looking at. In a teledocumentary, the artist is a vaudeville turn, a warm-up act for more congenial entertainments.

For anyone with a higher purpose, the license of democracy is fatally debilitating: it's so hard for the poet to stay alienated; his refusal to conform becomes, paradoxically, an act of conformity. Interviewing Harold Pinter on TV a few years ago, the BBC's Anna Ford, displaying the scrupulous political impartiality for which the Corporation is renowned, asked him how it felt to live in Britain "at a time when it's virtually illegal to be in opposition." Pinter had the good grace to look both sheepish and frustrated: it's not as direct as the Stasi or the KGB, but to be made to look like a chump on a national broadcasting outlet funded by a government poll tax is nevertheless a subtle form of political denigration. Still, for someone whose views are illegal, he's having a good autumn: as an actor, in *The Hothouse* (Chichester Festival Theatre); as an author, in the revival of *Old Times* (Wyndham's Theatre); and as a director, of Ronald Harwood's *Taking Sides* (at the Criterion). *The Hothouse*, a piece of satirical juvenilia written by Pinter in 1958 and then set aside for almost a quarter-century, is a reminder of Pinter's physical command of the stage. He plays an ex-military man running a state mental institution and the gamut of emotional range from bureaucratic befuddlement to rampant violence. As with later Pinter, the place is a metaphor for all authority; the difference is that all the Pinteresque menace bleeds out of the piece because of a structural weakness. The hothouse of the title is an interrogation chamber: as long as we don't see it but only hear about it, we're frightened; the moment it's physically represented on stage, the threat—the fear of the unknown—vanishes. In more recent, more elliptical works like *Mountain Language*, Pinter has understood, as well as any secret policeman, that nothing is more menacing than disorientation: his reputation as a political playwright has depended on keeping the nature of the threat to us suitably vague. It would be easier elsewhere. Toward the end of Harwood's *Taking Sides*, the great German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler turns to his accuser and says something with which Pinter would no doubt concur: "Only tyrannies understand the power of art."

Or as Salman Rushdie, with a wistfulness only partly ironic, mused in a London restaurant the other day: "I get treated more seriously as a writer in Iran than I do here."

Taking Sides put me in mind of Rushdie throughout, and not just because it settled into the Criterion at the same time as the beleaguered Rushdie launched his first novel since *The Satanic Verses*. Ronald Harwood is president of PEN, the international organization of writers, and therefore responsible for maintaining collective artistic solidarity with the novelist; Pinter, his director, was called upon, in the early days of the *fatwa*, to stand *in loco salmani* and deliver the great man's words at public meetings. Together, they created an evening which, though set in 1948 and concerned with the events of the previous twelve years, seems to project forward to art's present dilemma: why do you only get treated

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seriously in Iran or China, and never in Britain or America?

We are in the American zone of occupied Berlin; Beethoven is playing on the gramophone and Major Arnold is slumped on his desk. His secretary, a young German, is surprised that anyone can sleep through some of the greatest music ever written. "Beethoven's Fifth Symphony bores me shitless," drawls the American. Emmi suggests he might prefer the Ninth. "Why?" asks Arnold, "Did he write shorter as he got older?"

The Major is waiting to interrogate Wilhelm Furtwängler, one of the finest musicians of our century but a man who, in history's eyes, made the wrong call: he stayed on in Nazi Germany. His local reputation means nothing to the American: "Hey, he's probably Bob Hope and Betty Grable rolled into one! Jeez, and I never heardda him!" he snarls in mock-wonder. Major Arnold refers to Furtwängler as a "bandleader" and compares him with Dix Dixon, an alto sax player whose dodgy insurance claims he investigated back in the States. When the maestro arrives, he is stiff, dignified, formal: "Art and politics," he insists, "should have nothing to do with each other." "Wilhelm," replies the Major, "you were so close you were in the same shithouse with 'em. You were wipin' their fuckin' asses." Emmi stops transcribing and covers her ears—a very German reaction to unpleasantness. Eileen Diss's set is a drab office in the rubble of Berlin: we have seen the collapse not only of the buildings but of the assumptions of German culture.

No artist who puts his art at the service of the state can expect to emerge with much credit. At the end of his life, in his memoir *Testimony*, Shostakovich insisted that, although he was ostensibly praising the Soviet system, he was, in fact, subverting it. But I listen to *The Sun Shines Bright over Our Motherland*, his cantata of 1952, and I don't *hear* subversion: it sounds *felt*. Translate the title into German and then try to imagine anyone performing it this last half-century. But Shostakovich is lucky: the civilized world is still prepared to indulge the tyranny he hymned. Harwood reminds us of this distinction as Furtwängler's interrogation proceeds and the conductor wonders weather the Major would be as hard on Shostakovich or Prokofiev. The American has, of course, never heard of either.

Every London critic wrote about this play in the context of an artist's responsibility not to collaborate with barbarism. But Furtwängler is a poor vessel for such a question: he was never a Party member; he criticized the regime in the press and in private; he resigned or declined all official positions in Nazi Germany, though he remained as guest conductor; he helped many Jews to escape, at extreme personal risk to himself, though he was enough of a snob to only help *musical* Jews. It is, by the dismal standards of his compatriots, a respectable record, and Harwood uses the supporting characters to emphasize it again and again. Besides, if you want a German conductor who sold his soul to the Nazis, you'd surely choose Herbert von Karajan: he liked the Party so much, he had two separate memberships; his postwar rehabilitation was (unlike Furtwängler's) spectacular; and, to the end of his days, he always gave the impression that, say what you like about the Nazis, they knew how to treat a great maestro. As Harwood has a weasely violinist observe: "A conductor is also a dictator, you see."

Just so. It is a curious phenomenon, the authoritarian tendency of artists, and by no means confined to Nazi Germany. Surveying the grim roll call of celebrity boosters for causes the rest of us instinctively recoil from, you can't help pondering the unhealthy preoccupations of art: self-proclaimed artists are full of ideas, abstractions, theories, and they are attracted to political philosophies that deal in the same. Unfortunately, all the ideologies that are soundest in theory, in abstract, are the worst in practice. Conversely, all the most benign regimes—Canada's constitutional monarchy, say—are indefensible in theory but very

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pleasant if you have to live under them. In directing Harwood's play, Harold Pinter has his own contribution to make to these matters. For some years, under the Thatcher terror, he and his wife, Lady Antonia, ran the 20th June Group, a dissident salon whose membership included Rushdie and which met at the Pinters' home in Holland Park: among those who turned up to take tea with the men of letters and the Socialist Earl's daughter was Daniel Ortega, in his best-pressed Sandinista fatigues. The 20th June Group disbanded because the British, rather than persecuting them, just fell around giggling.

As Communism unraveled, the author Fay Weldon went on BBC TV to express her reservations about *glasnost*: "Yes, but who's going to bring in the harvest?" she fretted, conjuring a delightfully dotty picture of bucolic collectivism. One thing's for sure: it won't be the artists bringing in the harvest. For many of these sentimental sociable Socialists, all animals are equal but some cats are cooler than others. After the Wall fell, Pinter turned up to deliver a speech by Rushdie arguing that, with religion discredited and the end of political ideology, it was time for art in general and the novel in particular to take their place. It was one of several instances since the *fatwa* when Rushdie laughingly misjudged his countrymen. By making his predicament a crusade about free speech and the role of literature in society, he emphasized his specialness, his apart-ness. He was at it again in September: "This is not a battle about me—it is a fight about many writers: stirring things up is our proper function in society." He should, instead, have appealed for popular support on this basis alone: "I am a British subject and a gangster state has taken a contract out on me." That is all: in his right to the protection of the state, he is no more special than a plumber.

This, it seems to me, is the real concern at the heart of *Taking Sides*. Harwood, a Jew himself as well as a South African (he's written the forthcoming film version of *Cry, the Beloved Country*), scrupulously avoids the pitfalls of his title. He does not take sides—at least not in the matter of the artist's duties to the wider world. Furtwängler has immense stature, but he is not especially warm or likable. You root for him not because he is a hero, not because you subscribe to the ennobling powers of art, but for negative reasons: because, when presented with dramatic conflict, you are repelled by the alternative; because the fellow who represents the good guys is a monster. Here is where the play *does* take sides—and ferociously so. Everything about the *dramatis personae* is carefully weighted: Emmi is a German, but her father was killed in the plot against Hitler; Major Arnold's Lieutenant is an American Jew of German birth whose parents died in the camps, but who sympathizes with Furtwängler; Frau Sachs is not Jewish, but her husband was and Furtwängler helped him escape; the second violinist is a shabby little creep, but the American offers him the chance to "plea bargain" if only he'll dish the dirt on the conductor . . .

"Plea bargaining": one of the many delicious American contributions to the English language. Would an insurance investigator serving in the U.S. Army in 1946 have used the phrase? I don't think so, but it underlines the play's point: this isn't right or wrong, it's victor's justice—and it is the nature of the victor with which the production seems preoccupied.

Harwood could have had Furtwängler confronted by any number of Allied officers—a Briton, or a Frenchman, or a civil, intellectual, cultured American. So we must assume he deliberately chose a boorish, foul-mouthed, philistine clod. Whenever anyone posits, Salman-like, something about the artist's proper function in society—"Art has mystical powers which nurture man's spiritual needs"—Major Arnold responds with a barrage of obscenities and a sneer about Furtwängler being "kingpin in a shithouse." What's already a caricature is further exaggerated by Michael Pennington's reading: here is a persuasive Shake-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spearean actor of great skill, and yet, aided by a ridiculous accent, he balloons his character to even coarser and crasser extremes.

Harwood offers no reason why the American should be so determined to destroy Furtwängler—except that he is deaf to music, obtuse to art, he cannot comprehend beyond Dix Dixon, Bob Hope, and Betty Grable. The conflicts of the past rage at their fiercest not between Furtwängler and the Major but *within* Furtwängler: in Daniel Massey's towering performance, the face is fixed in a permanent slump, but the sunken eyes blaze with deep self-anger and grief; they are a paradox, the glare of a living death, and there is more self-realization in them than in any line of dialogue. He is bewildered by his inquisitor: every sentence stinks, every image is ugly and degrading.

Whether Harwood intended it to be explicit, Pinter's direction and Pennington's inflation of the role leave us in no doubt: if Furtwängler represents the past, the oafish Yank is the future. Major Arnold is ushering in the postwar world of demotic American culture, where no one will care what the conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic thinks because they'll be too busy debating the merits of S&M pop videos and films where hip hoodlums shout "Shut the fuck up, you fucker!" back and forth at each other.

Toward the end, the Major reveals how he's haunted by what he's seen at Belsen and asks Furtwängler, "Are you setting art and culture against the millions killed by your pals?" It's no contest—obviously: it's difficult to sustain arguments about the redeeming qualities of art when you consider all those Germans who listened to Beethoven at night and then cheerfully processed their victims the following morning: on the whole, you're better off with a Betty Grable fan. I suspect Harwood wanted to pitch Furtwängler against a healthy skeptic about art's loftier claims. But that final, damning question rings false from Pennington. As directed by Pinter, he has become something else: an anticipation of the American future, of a world without art.

Cultural imperialism is a popular theme in the defensive, paranoid rump of British theater, and it recurs in Nick Dear's *Zenobia*, the Royal Shakespeare Company's only new play this season. It is circa 270 A.D. on the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire—or, if you like, Central Syria. Queen Zenobia of Palmyra is tired of presiding over a Roman dependency and decides to assert Palmyran independence. "A great western coalition" is sent to bring her back into line, and you don't have to scratch too hard to find glib parallels with the Gulf War, Bosnia, Chechnya, or almost anything. But it's difficult when the play has been staged by Mike (*Crazy for You*) Ockrent as, if you like, *An Ironic, Postmodern Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*: practically everything that works in the play relies on our tapping into our vast memory bank of Hollywood adventures—a bit of Harrison Ford here, a touch of Victor Mature there. The Ancient World is a world we know only from film.

Mind you, that's beginning to apply to everything these days. The RSC is flogging *Zenobia*'s stablemates this season with posters designed to mimic movie advertising: *Coriolanus*, for example, has the punning slogan, "A Natural Born Killer Too." It seems Shakespeare now needs a hand from Oliver Stone and Quentin Tarantino. The English National Opera tried something similar a couple of years back, advertising Puccini and Verdi in lurid tabloid headlines. The problem with this approach is that it's defeatist: it denies the possibility that these forms can ever be anything in their own rights. We are all crossing the stage from Maestro Furtwängler's side to Major Arnold's.

"Only tyrannies understand the power of art." But turn it around: art understands only the power of tyrannies. Remove the tyranny and, against more elusive targets, art stumbles and falls: in Eastern Europe, they thought they were building a world fit for Václav Havel to be performed in, and woke up to find they'd merely added another stop to the Michael Jackson tour. You can't pass through London these days

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

without being aware that there is a Big Story unfolding remorselessly: England is atrophying, its culture ersatz American, its regulations half-heartedly European. But it is a difficult subject to dramatize, to stage. A non-tyrannous state tends, logically, to the theater of Alan Ayckbourn, a sharp observer of the foibles and regrets of the English middle classes. Ayckbourn is often described as Britain's Neil Simon, and neither man has had much success in the other's country—a point Simon himself is wont to make in mitigation for his failures in the West End. But Ayckbourn can be much bleaker: think of *Absurd Person Singular*, set on three successive Christmas Eves, each one reducing the characters to drunker, crueler, sadder failures, or *Family Circles*, in which he puts three unhappy sisters through alternative marriages, each one worse than their present numbing state of despair. He's also much more interested than Simon in playing with form, in setting his characters in time-warps and parallel realities, in physically presenting them with the opportunity to do what Harwood and Pinter's protagonists can only brood on: the chance to intercept their earlier selves and change the future. Comparing *Communicating Doors* (at the Gielgud) with Simon's current *London Suite*, it's easy to spot which playwright's working harder. Both evenings are set in London hotels—Simon's is modeled on the Connaught, Ayckbourn's is closer to the Savoy—and both are confined to the same one-set suite. But Ayckbourn roams across time, as a murderous businessman's late first wife, late second wife, and whip-wielding dominatrix encounter one another in 2014, 1994, and 1974 and try to figure out how to avoid their fates. Simon has never been that exercised by plot mechanics.

The trouble is, plot mechanics is all it feels like. It's the sort of evening you get when you have a clever dramatist in full command of his powers but with nothing to say. There are sex-comedy jokes and Hitchcock jokes and virtual-reality jokes, there's an efficient cast led by Julia McKenzie, and there's only the fifth happy ending in Ayckbourn's forty-six plays. But the whole is empty and parasitic and leaves you feeling cheated. Admirers of traditional Ayckbourn blackness will take comfort in the scenes set in 2014, when there is, apparently, artillery fire over South London and a gun battle raging in the Strand. Well, I wouldn't be surprised. Previously, in *Henceforward . . .*, Ayckbourn advanced the not unusual proposition that the outlook for mankind was not promising, but back then he took the trouble to integrate it into the plot. Here, it's just fashionable dressing. In a theater with little to say, tyranny is now a necessary condition even for as modest an art form as the comedy thriller.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Art

The native & the new

by Mario Naves

Non-Western art played a pivotal role in the making of modernist painting and sculpture. Indeed, without non-Western influences the art of this century is unimaginable. What would the *oeuvres* of Picasso and Brancusi, to name just two prominent examples, look like had these artists never seen African art?

The relationship between modern and non-Western art was largely predicated on matters of form, and Western artists used motifs from such art with relish and respect. It would be no exaggeration to claim that for some modern artists their affinity with their non-Western counterparts bordered on kinship. Admittedly, such kinship may have been fostered on romantic (and condescending) notions about the enchantments of "primitive" societies; and, in the end, some artists may have been indifferent to the cultures from which the artifacts they admired had originated. This has become, in recent years, a contentious subject.

But isn't an artist's responsibility art and not anthropology? Given the ideological nature of much contemporary art, such a question may be moot. Yet, one of the noteworthy aspects of the Western artists featured in the recent exhibition "Affinities and Influences: Native American Art and American Modernism" [1] was their attempt at creating a uniquely American modern art by fusing, sometimes promiscuously, European and non-Western sources. It could be said that in doing so they were celebrating cultural diversity. But it should also be said that, above all else, they were pursuing an art of universal appeal.

Universality is an idea (and an ideal) regarded with disdain in some quarters of the art world, and it is politic to be leery of a concept that lends itself so easily to a shaggy sentimentality. Having said that, however, there is a lot in art that *is* universal, as Gail Stavitsky and Twig Johnson, co-curators of "Affinities and Influences," understand. Stavitsky, curator of collections and exhibitions at the Montclair Art Museum, and Johnson, the museum's curator of education and Native American art, locate the affinities between American modernism and Native American art in "the common aesthetic values which transcend differences in time and origin." This may seem an obvious trope, but given the fractious culture in which it is framed, it is also a brave one and to be applauded.

The exhibition succeeded in detecting these "common aesthetic values" more by influence than by actuality, however, and in a manner less thorough than one would hope. "Affinities and Influences" was a modest show that felt like a trial run for a more comprehensive exhibition. All the work on view was drawn from the holdings

1 "Affinities and Influences: Native American Art and American Modernism" was on view at the Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey, from July 16 through October 1, 1995.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the Montclair Art Museum, and one imagines that the curators made do with a somewhat limited collection. Consequently, Stavitsky and Johnson at times forced the issue. It is well known, for instance, that Jackson Pollock valued and emulated Indian art, but one would never know it from *Untitled* (1951), a splatter drawing that owes more to the Surrealism of Miró and Masson than to *Father Sky and Mother Earth* (*c.* 1980), the Navajo sand painting to which the curators compared it. In fact, all of the modernist work shown here owes as much to European painting—Surrealism and Cubism, in particular—as to anything else. One could have removed the Indian art on view, retitled the exhibit "Affinities and Influences: European and American Modernism," and nobody would have blinked twice.

Well, maybe a few gallery goers would have blinked; and to deny the importance of Native American art to the painters in this exhibition (there were no sculptors included) would be to truck in falsehoods. Aside from Pollock, the other major names in "Affinities and Influences" were William Baziotes, Adolph Gottlieb, Robert Motherwell, and Mark Rothko; also here were lesser-known artists such as Will Barnet, Peter Busa, Betty Parsons, Theodoros Stamos, Jay Van Everen, and Steve Wheeler. Their paintings were contrasted with a variety of Indian objects: pottery, basketry, blankets, masks, and totems. The curators set up agreeable rhythms between crosscurrents of form, and these correspondences were, at the very least, interesting. When Stavitsky and Johnson hit the right notes—as they did when comparing Gottlieb's *Specter of the Sea* (1947) with a Tlingit Chilkat blanket (*c.* 1880–90)—the correspondences were illuminating.

But they weren't necessarily illuminating in a way that casts favorable light on the manner in which modernist painters used Indian motifs. With few exceptions, most of the painters here used Native American art in a literal manner. As resistant as I am to using the word "appropriation"—redolent, as it is, of the shake-and-bake school of picture making typified by David Salle—it does go some way in explaining why so much of the work here seemed secondhand, patchy, even a bit phony. It was all very earnest, even reverent toward its American Indian sources, but this reverence rarely translated into paintings one could believe in.

Which is also why "The Pictographs of Adolph Gottlieb," seen earlier this year at the Brooklyn Museum, was a disappointment. The Pictographs look to Klee and Miró as much as to the Indian and African art Gottlieb loved and collected. But notwithstanding Gottlieb's prowess as a colorist, they are second-rate pictures. While his symbols may have been invented, they have the quality of imitation and are never fully integrated with the paintings' structure. One could, presumably, place their inadequacies on the artist's indifference to the social and cultural meanings of the non-Western art he took off from. But it is more likely that the Pictographs' failings lie in Gottlieb's limitations as a painter. Would that he possessed Klee's compositional acuity or Miró's linear mastery. For that matter, would that he possessed, in the Montclair's *Specter of the Sea*, the design sense of the anonymous artisan whose painting of a bird adorns the museum's Zia Pueblo *olla*, or ceramic water jar (*c.* 1935). This bird is a marvelous bit of pictorial condensation—all pregnant curves and sharp points of emphasis—predicated on a deft wit and, most likely, astute observation. Gottlieb's swollen do-dads and schematic "masks" seem hokey in comparison.

Admittedly, the Pictographs were the work of an artist in transition, as were the Indian-influenced paintings of Pollock and Rothko. There is nothing half-realized, however, about the work of William Baziotes, whose *Toy Animal* (1947) was a high point of the exhibition. With its blue and green biomorphs bobbing in an ocher background, it's a painting with a sense of play to it, not unlike that found in the Zia Pueblo *olla*. Baziotes is as good an example as any of an artist who swallowed his in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fluences whole—Native American art and Miró, toy figurines and "primitive" fetishes—and made them his own. His forms are at once familiar and mysterious, comical and solemn. Baziotes's paintings look better every time I see them.

I wish I could say the same of the Indian Space Painters. This group, represented here by Barnet, Busa, and Wheeler, based their work on the flat pictorial space of Northwest Coast Indian art, which they saw, according to Barnet, as "the next step past Cubism." Needless to say, artists are still trying to figure out the steps *inside of* Cubism, and it is probably unfair to judge this group based on the selection of pieces seen here (three works-on-paper and a woodcut). But it is unlikely, considering the other Indian Space paintings I've seen, that there is significant work to be found among them. Wheeler, in particular, seems little more than a talented amateur whose imagery, distinguished by a peculiarly rote sense of *horror vacui*, has nevertheless garnered a respectable reputation among smart people. The one exception may be Peter Busa. His untitled gouache of 1942, a lopsided combination of Indian art and Cubism, has the alacrity of someone genuinely coming to terms with the form. It has considerably more vim than, say, Motherwell's *Ulysses* (1947–51), and it would be instructive to see more of Busa's work.

This may be true also of Jay Van Everen (1875–1947). There is apparently little that is known about Van Everen other than that he was an artist, illustrator, and designer of mosaics for the New York City subway system at the turn of the century. There were three Van Everen paintings included in "Affinities and Influences," each a weird and lively blend of Indian art, Art Deco, Synchronism, and Symbolism. (His use of color and pattern leads me to believe that he was familiar with Marsden Hartley's paintings as well.) The two figurative paintings, *Untitled* and *Amerindian Theme* (none of the Van Everen paintings were dated), were characterized by candy-like colors and the artist's tendency to couch his admiration for Indian art in cloying terms: the undulating clouds and stylized figure in *Untitled* had the spacey extravagance of a vintage psychedelic rock poster. *Chariot Race*, however, was fine and, not coincidentally, abstract. Ironically, the one part of the painting most obviously based on Indian art was also the least compelling: a drab, geometric "frame" whose designs were probably inspired by something like those on the Pawnee/Osage parfleche case (*c.* 1875) displayed nearby. The center of the canvas, however, was a knockout jumble of jagged geometry and jigsaw shapes knit together by slabs of white space. By placing *Chariot Race* so that it was framed by the gallery entrance as one walked into the exhibition, the curators proved their acumen by showcasing what they'd got: the best painting in the show.

It was, however, the Native American art on view that carried "Affinities and Influences." The Montclair Museum prides itself on its collection of Native American art, and judging from the samples on view here, their pride is well placed. Besides the Chilkat blanket and the Zia Pueblo *olla*, other notable pieces included a Haida wooden bowl (*c.* 1875–1900), its black band punctuated by a string of unblinking eyes, and a Haida raven rattle (*c.* 1900), a bit of three-dimensional derring-do by an artist with an incisive sense of sculptural tension and an adroit sense of humor. "Affinities and Influences" was but the first of several exhibits to be drawn from the museum's collection that will juxtapose Western and Native American art, and it will be interesting to see a broader view of both collections. If "Affinities and Influences" proved to be underwhelming, it was also provocative. One got the sense that Stavitsky and Johnson are skeptical of received opinion, a boon no matter how one looks at it, and that they are curious and capable enough to have a few surprises up their sleeves. Let's see what they bring us next.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Music

Paul Hindemith: a centenary cenotaph

by John Simon

The New York City Opera and its enterprising director and principal conductor, Christopher Keene, deserve our congratulations for temerariously opening the new season with Paul Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*. One understands Keene's eagerness to present an opera he loves, and that, though finished in 1935, has not until this Hindemith centenary received a fully professional production in America. Yet to mount such a grand-scale, technically demanding work on the City Opera's usual shoestring endangers the opera's communicativeness, if not indeed its artistic merit.

Composed to a libretto by Hindemith himself—perhaps his first mistake—the piece is subtitled "Opera in Seven Tableaus," with *Bilder* meaning both scenes and pictures, appropriate to the hero, the painter (*Maler*) Mathias Grünewald, whose work the opera evokes both visually and musically. About Grünewald, whose real name was Mathis Nithart or Gothart Nithart, little is known for certain. Though he died in 1528 in Halle, whither he had retired as a millwright, neither his birthplace nor his birth date is known, the latter being placed anywhere between 1460 and 1480. So Hindemith was free to invent his life story, which he turned into an examination of the artist's place in society, just like the earlier *Cardillac* and the later *Die Harmonie der Welt*. Mathis is Hindemith in the world of rising Nazism projected into the Peasants' War of the sixteenth century.

Mathis is court painter to Albrecht von Brandenburg, Cardinal of Mainz. On leave of absence, Mathis is painting murals for the Monastery of St. Anthony when Hans Schwalb, the leader of the peasants, and Regina, his young daughter (the only invented character), irrupt seeking shelter from the imperial army. Schwalb wonders that anyone can still selfishly paint instead of taking up arms. Mathis insists that painterliness is next to godliness, but has his doubts. Regina's lovely singing induces him to give her a beautiful hair ribbon, a present to him from Ursula Riedinger, the daughter of a rich Lutheran merchant. He helps the Schwalbs escape.

At the Cardinal's, Lutheran reformists and Catholic counterreformists have at each other verbally. An imperial officer demands the Cardinal's support; Mathis pleads for help to the peasants. The Cardinal, an enlightened liberal, refuses both, but is sadly helpless against Rome's demand to have Lutheran books publicly burned. At Riedinger's house, these books seem well concealed until Capito, the Cardinal's counselor and a bit of a double agent, reveals their hiding place to the soldiery. While the literary *auto-da-fé* rages in the marketplace, Capito and Riedinger hatch a plot to marry the well-dowered Ursula to the Cardinal, thus enabling him to indulge his expensive tastes while obliging him to abandon Catholicism. Ursula, who had an affair with Mathis and still loves him, wants to follow

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

him to the peasants, but he won't take her along—out of love or lack of it. She sadly agrees to marry the Cardinal.

The peasants are less interested in justice than in revenge. They kill Count von Helfenstein and are about to rape the Countess. Mathis manages to temporarily stop them. Schwalb rallies the apathetic peasantry to battle with the imperial forces, and perishes in gallant defeat. His reprimands to Mathis sting, but the painter, saved by the Countess for having rescued her, snatches Regina from her father's corpse and, disgusted with the peasants' vindictiveness and inefficiency, escapes with the girl.

Albrecht is flabbergasted by Capito and Riedinger's proposal that he marry Ursula, whom he admires but rebukes for lending herself to such barter. When the girl nobly proclaims her Lutheran faith that led her to this self-sacrifice, Albrecht is moved to a similar act of faith. He relinquishes his office to become a Catholic hermit, and blesses Ursula, whom he directs to fight for her faith on her own.

Mathis and Regina are fleeing through the Odenwald forest. Mathis consoles the frightened girl, haunted by the image of her slain father, by telling her of his vision of an angelic concert—one of the panels of the Isenheim Altar, his forthcoming masterpiece. Regina sleeps and Mathis dreams: he is St. Anthony, tempted by a chorus of demons and sundry tempters enacted by the characters of the opera. All this will become part of the Isenheim Altar, along with Cardinal Albrecht who, in the guise of St. Paul, comes to Anthony-Mathis's rescue, reminding him of his high and inescapable artistic mission.

Back in his Mainz workshop, the aging painter has been joined by Ursula; together they try to ease Regina on her deathbed. As her last wish, she gives her beloved ribbon to Ursula, asking her to return it to Mathis, so as to recognize him by it in Heaven. Little does she know that the ribbon had been the love token with which Ursula tried to bind Mathis to herself. Regina dies and Ursula departs. Mathis, through with his labors, prepares to go as Albrecht arrives and offers him his house and friendship for his declining days. Mathis replies that he must, like the forest animals, seek out his death spot alone. They bid each other a tender farewell, and Mathis stores his few remaining precious possessions in a trunk before leaving: his brushes, decorations, books, and the memento of his loves: Ursula's and Regina's ribbon.

For all the clunkiness of the libretto, this is the most pictorial of operas, not only in its re-creation of images from the Isenheim Altar, but also in other painterly scenes. We need to see the sun-bathed Rhine landscape beloved of Mathis-Hindemith, the peaceful monastery retreat invaded by war, the nocturnal marketplace aflame with book-burning, the Odenwald forest at nightfall with demons, the ruined village of Königshofen . . . well, the production manages that at least. John Conklin has designed a unit set of crumbling houses that, with the addition of diverse semiabstract cutouts, is supposed to represent the various locales, but looks only like artsy cutouts on obstinately persistent ruins. So impoverished is the production that even the precious hair ribbon smacks of Woolworth's.

Take the inability of the temptation scenes to evoke the Isenheim Altar. The *dramatis personae* look no different as allegorical figures, which is especially embarrassing for Ursula, who, in rapid succession, must become beggar, harlot, and martyr, yet wears the same green gown—an evergreen, no doubt. Conklin does give us one brief smidgen of Grünewald's painting early on, but that merely whets the appetite for more Grünewald and less Conklin. Isenheim remains unconveyed.

And worse. The aging Mathis stays, in the person of William Stone, darkly curly-haired and youthful to the end. Schwalb looks more like Regina's brother than her father. Countess von Helfenstein (Robynne Redmon), who must later represent Luxury, wears an all-purpose garish red wig, making her a cheap tart. Thus the peasants' repeated

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poking around under her skirt may seem overexplicit, but hardly *lèse-majesté*. Which brings me to Rhoda Levine's infelicitous staging.

The diabolic chorus assaulting Anthony-Mathis is a troupe of red-clad acrobats in a gymnastic display with sticks. In the battle scene, the peasants, a scruffy lot (if less than a dozen constitutes a lot), fight a similarly understaffed army in such anemic fashion that you suspect poverty of imagination rather than mere financial restrictions. Schwalb's and, later, Regina's death scenes leave everyone, on and off stage, unmoved by their perfunctoriness. No less awkward is the love scene where Mathis and Ursula refer to their past affair, or the later one where Mathis refuses to take Ursula with him to the wars. Strangulated passions are not brought out, though here the composer, too, lets the director down.

Hindemith's great craft has melodic limitations. The melody is at its best in either the jauntily humorous or the grandly declamatory mode, where it can indulge in the rhetoric of counterpoint, canon, fugato, and fugue, to say nothing of oratorical climaxes in the brass. True, it can manage the subtle and even the ethereal along with much passage-work; what it can't do well is passionate rapture between man and woman. This has nothing to do with "modernism," especially as the later Hindemith was less innovatively anti-romantic and more conservative. In his early *enfant terrible* days, he did come up with a triptych of sensational one-act operas: *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen* (an expressionistic battle-of-the-sexes mishmash to a Kokoschka libretto), *Das Nusch-Nuschi* (a Burmese puppet play full of parodistic grotesquery), and *Sancta Susanna* (medieval nuns in heat, Satanic possession, and immurement), where lyricism is stinted on. In somewhat later operatic works, such as *Hin und zurück* and *Neues vom Tage*, comedy and social satire predominate, with lyricism and passion understandably unstressed.

But in the fully mature *Mathis*, where Hindemith, repudiating his cheeky earlier operas, confronts his problems as a composer and musical administrator amid rising Nazism, impassionedly committed music is his aim. Yet he cannot summon up what Janáček does, for instance, in the shattering final duet of *Jenůfa*, or Ravel in *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*, where the Child yearns for the vanishing Princess (*"Toi, le coeur de la rose"*). These are sudden, brief, wrenching moments of vocal-orchestral melodiousness that always elude Hindemith. Calum MacDonald refers to "a sweeping quality of epic in [Hindemith's] melodic expression." Though meant as a compliment, the phrase hints at the problem: the epic in Hindemith sweeps away the melody, which, instead of soaring on wings, rides on a broom.

But back to the matter at hand. The cut-rate City Opera singing was not up to snuff, sometimes snuffed out by the orchestra, and hardly ever achieving beauty of sound. Among the mostly undistinguished singers, some lacked even a decent German accent, so Joel Sorensen, the Capito. But major roles, too, were unimpressively filled—or impressively emptied. Lauren Flanigan was a shrill, lackluster Ursula; Michael Hayes a just serviceable Schwalb; Robynne Redmon, a discount Countess. The second lead, the Cardinal, was mangled by the megalomaniacal comprimario Allan Glassman. Having damaged numerous roles at the Met, he is now ravaging the City Opera with his glassy bellowings, his vocal stridency, and histrionic pallor. Listen to the Cardinal on either CD *Mathis*—the Kubelik on EMI with James King, or the Gerd Albrecht on Wergo with Joseph Protschka—and you will get a far better idea of what the role is all about.

William Stone, who was to sing Mathis, was recuperating from a severe throat infection, and medically forbidden to sing. Stephen Powell, freshly recovered from a cold, sang the role from the orchestra pit, while Stone walked through it on stage. I don't know whether Powell, too, was physically handicapped, or too new to the part, or overwhelmed by being piped into

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an alien throat, but he sounded tentative. Stone would probably have sung Mathis decently, but mere lip-synching may have thrown off even his miming, which was rather stiff. There was, however, one shining performance. As Regina, Mary Dunleavy was fine on all counts: a full-voiced, well-articulated singer, she is also a charming young actress who could hold her own in any company. I look, and listen, forward to more of her.

Second-rate as this orchestra is, it nevertheless played its collective heart out for Christopher Keene. Diagnosed with HIV and in chemotherapy, Keene could barely walk. Still, he conducted with vigor, precision, and empathy. And he began the evening with one of the wittiest and most gracefully delivered curtain speeches I have ever heard. His gallantry and musicianship fully merited the thunderous ovations at both start and finish.

This leaves the matter of the supertitles. I am one who believes in them, but the translation supplied by Roberta Vincent Edles is, at best, pedestrian, at worst subliterate, e.g., "neither right or left." Granted, Hindemith's text—sometimes rhymed, and always self-consciously ornate—is hard to render. For such poeticism, however, antipodal prosaism is not the answer.

Should one catch this *Mathis*? The opera is not the easiest to digest under any circumstances. What the late H. H. Stuckenschmidt wrote in *Schöpfer der neuen Musik* about another Hindemith work—"it contains some dry passages, fashioned with more craft than inspiration"—is not wholly inapplicable here; so the broader public might wish to abstain. But enterprising spirits imaginatively able to fill in what is missing from this mounting, inquiring minds undauntably seeking new experience, and, of course, dedicated Hindemithians should not be deterred. For me, however, this production can best be described as "Mathis das Malheur."

Publisher's note: Back issues of *The New Criterion* are for sale for $6 each. A list of highlights is available on request from the Office Manager.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The media

Taking the Nineteenth

by James Bowman

In France at the time of the 1974 election—the one in which Giscard beat Mitterand, which was seven years before the one in which Mitterand beat Giscard—I remember seeing among all the election posters and handbills a discreet little yellow notice that said: *Français! Assez des expériences inutiles Républicaines! Votez Monarchiste!* (Frenchmen! Enough of failed Republican experiments! Vote Monarchist!) I often think of that brave little band of monarchists with a special kind of admiration. Not because I am a monarchist myself, but because they refused to be cowed by a majority that was not just large but overwhelming. Here, I thought, was one place in the world where it was possible to raise a dissenting voice against the chorus of what everybody knows.

I thought of them again amid the media's unanimous self-congratulation over the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which gave women the right to vote. How I longed for one brave soul somewhere to stand up and say: Enough of failed sexual egalitarianism! Repeal the Nineteenth Amendment! (Not that *I* think that way. Not at all. God forbid that it should be suspected even for a single moment that I am not in favor of women voting, smoking, running for office, wearing trousers, piloting jet fighters—anything they want to do, basically. Do you think I'm crazy?) We have come so far so quickly, however, that the lieutenant governor of New York, Elizabeth McCaughy, was quoted in *The New York Times* (which called her "McCaughty") as celebrating the anniversary by saying:

> My daughters are amazed when I tell them that 75 years ago that [*sic*] women couldn't vote. And they are just as surprised when I tell them that 25 years ago, when their own mother was graduating for [*sic*] college and going out to look for a job, that help wanted ads still ran separate columns for men and women, and women were not called for jury duty in some states.

Her daughters' amazement is for her only a measure of progress, rather than a sad reflection on their education. Of course it does happen that the people of one generation are "surprised" by what their parents and grandparents once took for granted, but oughtn't it to be the aim of the historian to make them understand these things? And if they understand them, they will not be surprised but perhaps come to the admittedly politically inert conclusion that people, whether living or dead, can be fully human without sharing all their own prejudices.

Instead we have the article quoting one Leslee Smoke, a Girl Scout leader who brought six girls to Washington for the festivities from New York:

> I think of women not having the vote not so long ago, it seems unreal to these young girls.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> It is important that they know something about their history. About how unfairly women were treated, in a legal way, not so long ago.

For her, learning history is tantamount to learning of her own historic grievance. This is not history but tribal myth—OK or not, now, depending on the tribe. That it is being successfully conveyed, too, we have the evidence of one of the Girl Scouts, Miss Tierney Arnold, a ten-year-old whose ringing words end the article:

> A lot of people have really helped in women's rights. If it were not for them, we would not be able to speak out. We would not have any money because we would not be able to work. I think the pioneers really helped us.

Well, perhaps they did. But it is still a loss to American intellectual life and public discourse that no editor of a mainstream publication today would dare to commission an anniversary piece that even raised the question: Is the legacy of the Nineteenth Amendment *all* good? Is there *no* downside? Were our ancestors through so many centuries who reserved politics, like warmaking, to the province of the male simply stupid, selfish, and bigoted? It may be that they were. I daresay they were. But is it not troubling that even to raise the possibility that they were not is taboo?

The suffragettes are virtually the only heroes from the past who remain quite unsullied. And some who measure up to those giants among women are still with us. In a piece written for *Newsweek*, Betty Friedan modestly noted that

> On Aug. 26, 1970, the 50th anniversary of American women's gaining the right to vote, I led 50,000 women down Fifth Avenue in a Women's Strike for Equality—the explosion of the modern women's movement. This year, on the 75th anniversary, I leave for Beijing . . .

But now her battle-cry (or perhaps we should say her detonator, to continue the figure) is rather different:

> The problems in our fast-changing world require a new paradigm of social policy, transcending *all* "identity politics"—women, blacks, gays, the disabled. Pursuing the separate interests of women isn't adequate and is even diversionary. Instead, there has to be some new vision of community. We need to reframe the concept of success. We need to campaign—men and women, whites and blacks—for a shorter work week, a higher minimum wage, an end to the war against social-welfare programs. "Women's issues" are symptoms of problems that affect everyone.

For Miss Friedan, feminism has become merely a rationale, or a kind of guarantor of good faith, for outmoded social-welfarist politics. Indeed, it could be said that social-welfarist politics as currently practiced—in its concern for "diversity" and "self-esteem" and ever the caring gesture over the usefully (or even caringly) hard heart—is the final flowering of feminist logic. Could we then also say that the failure of social-welfare politics is at another level the failure of feminism? That the suffragist argument has now, after seventy-five years of trial, at last been shown to be deleterious to the Republic? No. Perhaps not.

But others at the Beijing conference offered similar generalizations of feminist concerns. Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese dissident, appeared in a smuggled video at the forum on its first day, to urge all women to emulate her own heroism: "It is not the prerogative of men alone," she said in that quaint way that foreigners have of stating the laughably obvious, "to bring light to this world. Women, with their capacity for compassion and self-sacrifice, their courage and perseverence, have done much to dissipate the darkness of intolerance and hate." On a somewhat less exalted level, Bella Abzug, according to George Archibald in *The Washington Times*, "joined hands with other women in a prayerful tribute to 'Mother Earth' ":

> "Give thanks for the fruits of life," said a Brazilian delegate who led the group in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> prayer. "Thanks to Mother Earth, for you give life. Thanks for water. People from my community decided no more Crucifixion. We believe in life. We celebrate life, not the Crucifixion. We are power."
>
> Mrs. Abzug and several dozen women holding hands then thrust their hands into the air, chanting: "I am power, I am power, I am power."

Why is it that several dozen women holding hands and chanting "I am power" seems to me almost an emblem of powerlessness?

They are like the aged Japanese woman who, according to Reuters, stood alone on the steps to the China National Olympic Stadium, holding up a banner, in English, which read: "Stop nuclear tests. Nuclear weapons results of non-feminism government. I am a mother of a Nagasaki victim." The pathos of her figure and its power to elicit feeling, so feminine in the bad old sense, is a direct consequence of her political irrelevance. Where there is actual power things are different. Writing about the Conference in the London *Sunday Telegraph*, Mary Kenny archly noted the splendid pacific potentialities of this belief in a non-"non-feminism government":

> The Turkish women made friends with the Cypriot women, the Balkan women devised a strategy for peace in former Yugoslavia, and "conflict resolution" was widely practised by all, in a way that the silly men who run the world never seem to manage. "The only conflict we did not resolve," said Lesley [Abdela, founder of the British 300 Group, which seeks 300 parliamentary seats for women], "was between the smokers and the non-smokers." The Balkans were a doddle next to that particular antagonism.

There is a rich satisfaction to be derived from fighting over smoking that is not present when your adversary has all the trappings of "non-feminism government" with which he can make your life really unpleasant. When the Chinese security forces harassed the attendees at the parallel conference of Non-Governmental Organizations at Huairou, thirty-five miles outside Beijing, the women issued an ultimatum, according to *The New York Times*, warning that "intense surveillance" by the Chinese must cease within twenty-four hours or they would do such things—they knew not what, but they would be the terrors of the earth. They might even pack up the whole forum! "If they do not comply," the *Times* quoted Salamo Fuliavi, one of the committee members, as saying, "we will go back to our constituencies and ask: Do you want to cancel, do you want to boycott, do you want to riot, or what? If they say let's go home, that's what it means."

For some reason, this did not strike terror into the hearts of the men with the guns, who continued intense surveillance unabated. In the end the ladies decided just to ignore them and carry on, in the words of another *Times* report, "despite concerns that, in some cases, freedom of expression was being severely stifled." Small wonder, then, that Hillary Clinton said on her arrival at the Conference that "I have very high hopes that this will not be just a lot of talk." The same day's paper reported that a confrontation between a group of women demonstrators and Chinese authorities ended with the women's retreat. "We have had a good day," their leader told the *Times*'s reporter. "We have shown them our power."

What Mrs. Clinton offered instead of talk was the heavy ordnance of reproof directed at, among others, her hosts, who were put on notice that "it is no longer acceptable to discuss women's rights as separate from human rights" and that "it is a violation of human rights when babies are denied food, or drowned, or suffocated, or their spines broken, simply because they are born girls, when women and girls are sold into slavery or prostitution for human greed." Would it then be OK if the slave traders gave the money to charity? "Human greed," needless to say, marks the reappearance of that global agenda raised by Betty Friedan. It goes together with war-making, the denial of free speech—which Mrs. Clinton also touched

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on—and other crimes whose victims are not always female but whose perpetrators are generally thought to be male.

It was not often thought worthy of remark that neither the slaughterers of girl babies nor the slavers and pimps nor the war-makers nor even the deniers of free speech were noticeably hindered in their activities by these salvoes. It was enough that the righteousness of the conferees had been given a good airing. There are limits to what you can actually *do*, as Betty Friedan pointed out in *Newsweek*: The women in Beijing, she said, "may have fantasies of demonstrating in Tiananmen Square, but I do not fancy the thought of American feminists ending up in Chinese prisons." And, indeed, which of us does?

But if prison is too high a price to pay for our convictions it seems a bit unrealistic to expect that Deng Xiao Ping and his more vigorous henchmen would take them very seriously. It is a problem that came up in a different way in the case of Shannon Faulkner. *The New York Times* gave her precipitate withdrawal from a hitherto all-male military college the headline: "Nation Analyzes and Agonizes Over Citadel Drop-out—But 29 Men Who Quit Escape All Scrutiny." It was a lovely illustration of how it is that a few score of people at Boswash cocktail parties and a selection of such representative Americans as Kathleen Brown, Geraldine Ferraro, and Susan Faludi appear in the eyes of *The New York Times* as the "Nation." The following story, by Sara Rimer, was truly heart-rending:

> When the male cadets heard the news at The Citadel on Friday, they stripped off their T-shirts, did victory pushups in the rain and surfed on mattresses on their barracks floors. But The Citadel was the only place where people were openly cheering. In dozens of interviews with men and women across the country, no one said they were happy that Miss Faulkner had quit. Instead, there was a sense of regret, disappointment, sympathy and even anger.

The consensus of Miss Rimer's sampling of the vox pop seemed to be that the men of The Citadel were terrified "that some woman's going to come along that's going to be faster or smarter" than they are. As Miss Faludi so trenchantly put it: "This is not an example of her faintheartedness. This is an example of the level of unmitigated cruelty that can be marshaled by a group of frightened men of all ages."

But Miss Faulkner herself cited "stress" as her reason for leaving—as if it were somehow unfair that someone aspiring to military training should be subjected to stress (she should maybe try getting shot at?). But women journalists were markedly reluctant to blame the young woman, who reported for duty twenty pounds overweight and had to retreat at lunch on the first day when she couldn't keep down her Beefaroni. Donna Britt in *The Washington Post* came about as near to censure as it was possible to do when she wrote: "One minute I'm exasperated with her for failing so quickly after so much buildup; the next I'm admiring her courage in admitting that she couldn't achieve what most folks wouldn't have attempted in a million years." Congress really ought to get around one of these days to issuing a medal in recognition of that kind of courage.

A "Style" section story elsewhere in the *Post* (by Megan Rosenfeld and Frank Ahrens) hailed "A Victory Even In Retreat" and quoted Pat Conroy, author of *The Lords of Discipline* (1980), a novel about The Citadel, as saying that "the corps of cadets could run Arnold Schwarzenegger out in two days." As in his novel, he blasted the cult of Southern masculinity and claimed, somewhat unconvincingly, that "the dumbest women I have come in contact with in my life have been South Carolina women who have virulently defended The Citadel against Shannon Faulkner." Even more strident was Susan Faludi (again), who is quoted as saying: "My heart goes out to her. It's a classic case of gaslighting. It's not her nerves; it's their harassment. I think whether she withdraws or not, she has to be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

given enormous credit for the nerves of steel she has displayed in getting this far."

That and overwhelming firepower might even win a war some day. But is it really the case, as editorialists for both the *Post* and *The New York Times* insisted, that Miss Faulkner's failure to realize the physical demands that were going to be made on her had nothing to do with the principle at stake? For them, it was simply a matter of civil rights: "an institution substantially funded by public money owes young women access to the same or a comparable educational experience," as the *Post* put it with implicit disregard for the purpose of the institution. That may be true, but it would sound much more convincing coming from those who did not seem so completely to share Shannon Faulkner's assumptions about what the military life involves.

"I am going to be in the corps and I will graduate as a member of the corps," she said blithely before she marched away. "I feel ready in every possible way." And even after she washed out, she insisted that "Physically, I was ready. I did not fail in any way. . . . But I think what I did was emotionally too much for one person—for someone who started when they were 18 years old. And I was so naïve. I still am in some ways." An interesting gloss on that naïveté was provided by Susan Faludi in an Op Ed piece that ran in *The New York Times*. Picking up on her would-be classmates' celebrations, she wrote that

> One reason the other Citadel cadets loathed Shannon Faulkner (aside from her sex) was her individuality, which affronted The Citadel's ethic. The academy purports to educate young men by making them conform. Conformity is enforced through anonymity.

This sounds like the prelude to another bit of Conroy-style invective aimed at the military ethos, but it soon emerges that Miss Faludi is in this respect on the side of the boys. Her objection is to the individualist feminism of people like Camille Paglia and Christina Hoff Sommers, "who tell women over and over: 'You can do it on your own. You don't need any help from the organized women's movement.'" This is the sort of thing that gives someone like Shannon Faulkner a false idea of what she can hope to accomplish. Miss Faulkner described herself as not a feminist but, precisely, "an individualist"—which recalls the words of the commandant to this year's corps of cadets at The Citadel: "Individualists do not make it here. If you want to stay an individual, every day will be a tough day." How foolish of Miss Faulkner, then, that

> when a Federal judge finally ordered The Citadel to admit her to its corps of cadets she told *The New York Times* that she didn't consider the ruling a victory "just for women"—only a confirmation of her belief that if you want something you have to "go for it." She avoided the feminist label for all the usual reasons, living in the Deep South being only the most obvious. And she got lots of press points for playing the role of the lone and apolitical female ranger, with no need for a meddlesome women's movement.
>
> But as Shannon Faulkner stood before the press last week, she shared with us her feminist epiphany, one that generally doesn't dawn on most women until much later in life: making a lone woman a star is not the same as advancing women's equality. In fact, it's counterproductive.

Thus, when she said "It would have been different if there had been other women with me" she had learned "the only aspect of The Citadel teachings that really matters: there is strength in numbers; solidarity counts."

How revealing! While The Citadel imagines that the purpose of its training is to teach its students the qualities necessary for defending their country against foreign enemies, to Miss Faludi "the only aspect" of such training that matters is what might be useful to the women's movement in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

furthering its political aims. It is as if "advancing women's equality" were for her the only reason ever to do anything—or as if it were, Beijing style, essentially the same as every other good cause. To such a way of thinking it is naturally perverse of men to insist on a solidarity that excludes them. What cause of theirs could be as important as the cause of women's equality, which its demands purport to preclude? If you don't believe in the existence of the purpose for which The Citadel has always been intended, it is a kind of impudence, a willful perversity on the part of its defenders to attempt to withhold it as an arena for "advancing women's equality." This point of view, however, makes it rather disingenuous of her to pooh-pooh the notion, as she does elsewhere in the piece, that Miss Faulkner "was a stalking horse for feminism." No, she wasn't but she damn well ought to have been, thinks Susan Faludi.

That's laying it on the line, anyway. Likewise, Robert N. Weiner, who is associated with the National Women's Law Center, wrote in military language in *The Washington Post* a defense of seeing the Faulkner case as an exact parallel to the classic civil-rights cases: like them, he said, it taught the lesson "that the battle transcends the limitations of the individual combatants, that the principles endure long after the participants falter." It's a war out there —as even the not-altogether naïve Miss Faulkner realized when she insisted: "I don't think there's any dishonor in leaving. I think there's dis-justice in my staying and killing myself just for the political point."

Fortunately for the defenders of patriarchal prejudice, there are quite a number of their opponents who are also reliable enemies of all such dis-justices. Like the women in Beijing, they will fight for a principle to the death—at least until the fight threatens their health or safety. One such is Margaret Carlson, whose "Public Eye" column in *Time* magazine quotes "military psychologist Dan Landis" as saying: "There are all kinds of macho traditions that have grown up at The Citadel whose rationales have long been forgotten. They're useless."

> Indeed (continues Miss Carlson), The Citadel's ego-stripping program can be worse than useless. One Citadel graduate was among the four Rangers who froze to death in a training exercise in Florida this year. His instructors told him to continue to string a rope in 52° water, and he did so until he died. Pentagon statistics show that since 1989 seven soldiers have died in training for every one killed in combat.

Miss Carlson's easy feminine assumption that war is all very well until people start dying reminds me of the sweet confidence of Desdemona when she tells the Duke in *Othello* that she wants to accompany her husband to the wars:

> That I did love the Moor to live with him,
> My downright violence and storm of fortunes
> May trumpet to the world. My heart's
> subdued
> Even to the very quality of my lord.
> I saw Othello's visage in his mind,
> And to his honours and his valiant parts
> Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate;
> So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,
> A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
> The rites for why I love him are bereft me,
> And I a heavy interim shall support
> By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

T. S. Eliot's censure of Othello for what he calls *bovaryism*, or the tendency to self-romanticization, is far less deserved than would be a similar charge leveled at Desdemona. Indeed, Othello's delusion is never more apparent than when he shares her own in seconding the request:

> And heaven defend your good souls that you
> think
> I will your serious and great business scant
> When she is with me. No, when light-winged
> toys
> Of feathered Cupid seel with wanton
> dullness

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

My speculative and officed instruments,
That my disports corrupt and taint my
business,
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm
And all indign and base adversities
Make head against my estimation.

The disposition of this request is wonderfully revealing:

DUKE: Be it as you shall privately determine,
Either for her stay or going. Th'affair cries
haste,
And speed must answer it.

SENATOR (*to Othello*): You must away tonight.
DESDEMONA: Tonight, my lord?

From the moment of her entering into it she is unprepared for the life of a warrior. And she who thrilled to the tales of battle cries heart-rendingly when the unexpected enemy approaches: "O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not" and "Kill me tomorrow; let me live tonight. . . . But half an hour. . . . But while I say one prayer." If the rationale of macho traditions is long forgotten, it is soon remembered when there are real battles to fight.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fiction chronicle

Introverts & émigrés

by Brooke Allen

However much we flatter ourselves to the contrary, the vast majority of Americans are the spiritual heirs not of Tom Paine or Thomas Jefferson but of John Calvin, and no contemporary writer is better aware of this fact than Evan S. Connell. In his great novel *Mrs. Bridge* (1959) and its sequel, *Mr. Bridge* (1969), he provided a brilliant and indeed peerless portrayal of upper-middle-class life in the buttoned-down, white-bread American Midwest. Mrs. Bridge herself, a Kansas City matron, is one of the most haunting characters in modern fiction. Innocent, passive, slightly ill at ease even in her own protected environment of home and country club, she is stupefyingly naïve, surprised and vaguely threatened by the occasional intimations she gets of a wider world which is indifferent to her own conservative Protestant values. It is easy to laugh at her, but such laughter is disturbing, for she is a widely recognizable American type, easily visible in our mothers, our grandmothers, perhaps even ourselves.

Aside from the Bridge books and his study of Custer, *Son of the Morning Star* (1984), Connell's work has not been widely popular but has appealed rather to a small group of aficionados. His books include *The Diary of a Rapist* (1966); *The Connoisseur* (1974) and *Double Honeymoon* (1976), both featuring Karl Muhlbach, a widowed suburban insurance executive and father; two free-verse books, *Notes from a Bottle Found on the Beach at Carmel* (1963) and *Points for a Compass Rose* (1973); and a fictionalized biography of Paracelsus, *The Alchymist's Journal* (1991). He has also produced a steady stream of short stories from the Fifties to the present day.

The new *Collected Stories of Evan S. Connell* brings together the stories from three published volumes as well as thirteen new stories and fourteen earlier, uncollected ones.[1] To see these works in a single collection is to understand why Connell has never won unanimous praise, for he turns out to be a wildly uneven writer. Here, marvelous pieces like "Nan Madol" and "Puig's Wife" keep company with really lousy ones like "The Trellis" and "Au Lapin Gros," and all manner of material in between. Connell has often been commended by critics for not settling into any particular formula, for continuing to experiment throughout his writing life—but there are two sides to that compliment, for not all of Connell's experiments have been successful, by any means.

The best stories by far are those dealing with the repressed, bourgeois world of the Bridges, the world Connell himself was born into in 1924. Connell has admitted that he based young Douglas Bridge largely upon himself as a child, and, unsurprisingly, his most effective characters are introverts who are gifted with more imagination and insight than the people around them; they

1 *The Collected Stories of Evan S. Connell*; Counterpoint, 675 pages, $30.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

secretly live a life of the mind on the fringes of a society from which they long to escape without being quite able to do so. Douglas Bridge and his sister, Ruth, belong to this type; so does Karl Muhlbach, the hero of five of the longer stories in this collection as well as of the two novels mentioned above.

Muhlbach is a widower (the first story, "Arcturus," takes place during his wife's final battle with cancer), a suburbanite who commutes into New York City to his job with an insurance company. On the surface, he is the prototypical organization man, but the reality is somewhat different: a distant descendent of Goethe, Muhlbach leads an inner life of some complexity. By turns innocent and cannily sophisticated in his judgments, Muhlbach desperately tries to reconcile sexual lust with American social mores and the unforgiving theological dicta on which they were originally based ("St. Augustine's Pigeon"), marvels at the emotional subtext of cocktail-party chatter ("The Mountains of Guatemala"), and, during a fraught reunion with the best friend of his youth and his sexually predatory wife ("Puig's Wife"), finds enlightenment on the real significance of his friendship with Puig. This last story, by the way, is one of the most honest pieces of fiction ever written about the mysterious dynamics of male friendship.

Connell has said in an interview that Muhlbach was inspired by Professor Cornelius in Thomas Mann's story "Disorder and Early Sorrow." "When I wrote 'Arcturus,' " Connell explains, "I was frankly copying the tone of it. I'm much indebted to Dr. Mann." While Muhlbach is apparently a conformist, there is inside him a completely detached observer who draws his own conclusions while Muhlbach goes through the conventional motions. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, for instance, Muhlbach, like his neighbors, builds a bomb shelter ("Otto and the Magi"), fully aware of the black absurdity of his own actions as he peruses catalogues featuring bomb-shelter furnishings and their horrifically cheery illustrations:

> . . . a happy family enjoying their deep, quiet satisfaction after the Event. We behold the earth above, devastation absolute, and the triumvirate below. On the divan Mother takes her ease. Smiling, she holds a letter she has just received. Father, casual in slacks and windbreaker, as though he has completed a round of golf, selects a phonograph record. He, too, is smiling. Susan, let us call her, wearing her school sweater, lounges on the carpet where she works at her arithmetic. We are not astonished that she, too, is smiling. . . . But where is the pet? Surely such a family would not be without a pet! We must conclude the siren caught the miserable beast away from home. That is to say, Rollo is now a shadow on the pavement.

Muhlbach furnishes his shelter with all the appropriate accoutrements, but the ironist in him cannot resist framing a quotation from Boileau above the door: "N'en déplaise à ces fous nommés sages de Grèce,/ En ce monde il n'est point de parfaite sagesse;/ Tous les hommes sont fous, et malgré tous leurs soins/ Ne diffèrent entre eux que du plus ou du moins."[2]

Stories like "Mrs. Proctor Bemis" and "The Corset" provide amusing and strangely touching glimpses of Kansas City's protected, Puritan women, but Connell outdoes all his other stories with his 1993 "Nan Madol." In this, a young man who has successfully escaped the Midwest for San Francisco gets a visit from his elderly uncle, a retired history professor from his home town. William does not especially look forward to a couple of days with his Uncle Gates, whom he has always considered to be on the dull side, but the reader, if not the rather dim William, is almost immediately charmed by the polite, detached old man, who turns out to be one of those rare

2 "With all due deference to those madmen known as the sages of Greece, in this world there exists no perfect wisdom; all men are mad, and despite all their efforts the only difference lies in whether they are more or less so."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

beings whose perceptions and very souls are open to all the world's rich variety.

Uncle Gates, William discovers, "had learned to read and speak several European languages, but did not consider himself a linguist. Also, he had begun to study Mandarin. I asked if Mandarin would be of much use in Springfield and he replied that it had not the slightest value"—a rare soul, indeed, in Springfield! And William is shocked (though we are not) when his beautiful girlfriend lights up in his uncle's presence as she has never done in his own.

J. D., the middle-aged hero of "The Walls of Avila" and "The Palace of the Moorish Kings," is a very different and ultimately less successful rebel than Muhlbach or Uncle Gates. As a young man he left his middle-American town to travel in Europe, and did not return. While J. D.'s old friends were getting jobs, getting married, getting dull, he continued his travels—Carthage, Tunis, Istanbul, Florence, Majorca, Lisbon, Teheran, Penang, Delhi, Avila. "He is Don Quixote," observes Dave Zobrowski, one of his friends, "without a lance, an opponent, or an ideal."

By the time of the Korean War, when they are in their forties, the friends begin to feel bitterness toward the wandering lotus-eater. "Perhaps we were annoyed by his indifference toward our values," ventures the narrator. The hostility becomes open when Dave Zobrowski's young son dies in the war. "When we heard that Davy was dead, that his life had been committed to the future of our nation, we perceived for the first time how J. D. had never quite met the obligations of citizenship." Yet how little people understand their real needs and motivations! When J. D. is indeed defeated, giving up his romantic life to go home with a dull wife to a dull job, Dave, the narrator, and the others are perversely saddened.

J. D. has tried to leave middle-America—tried valiantly, and failed. Connell's own life has constituted a similar bid for freedom. Instead of extended foreign travels, he has opted for membership in American bohemian circles, spending much of his life in the Bay Area and in Santa Fe, both meccas for artists of every description. But the tenor of his fiction would indicate that for him, as with J. D., you can't take Kansas City out of the boy. All of Connell's most intense emotionality is reserved for his repressed and conventional characters, while the stories that deal with milieux of the hip and arty, whether in California or Paris, are uniformly thin and pointless. Connell is perfectly well able to capture surface idiosyncrasies, but what interest do surface idiosyncrasies have in themselves? In fact they are only of interest in terms of what they reveal about their possessor's inner life. The recent story "Acedia" is a case in point: various Bay Area eccentrics cavort drunkenly at a houseboat party, to no particular purpose; they are caricatures rather than people, and not even very amusing caricatures. The same is true of "Hooker," the story of a man's encounter with a wild and sexy woman who turns out to be literally out of her mind, and "Bowen," the somewhat more sophisticated but still unsatisfactory tale of a not-quite-talented-enough novelist and his inevitable descent into seediness.

There is a vacuum at the heart of these stories, and the kind of pointless, flip writing they represent is exemplified in a series of sketches that Connell produced over a period of eighteen years, involving a couple of languid young men, Leon and Bébert, who lounge aimlessly about at a wealthy lakeside community. Leon and Bébert are pure Wodehousian drones, but Connell lacks Wodehouse's magical ear or his editorial instinct: he lets Leon and Bébert babble on *ad nauseam* in all their shallowness. We know them for what they are after only a few pages, and they do nothing to make us waver in our opinion. Only in one story ("Leon and Bébert Aloft") does Leon come momentarily to life: he unexpectedly develops a social conscience and goes into a furious rant against the Vietnam War, an act so wildly out of character that it boldly achieves the ring of truth.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It would be hard to find any writer in the world more different from the peculiarly American Connell than Vladimir Nabokov. What cared that mandarin aristocrat for Protestant qualms and trepidations? What interest could the boring travails of provincial businessmen hold for the most cosmopolitan writer of his very cosmopolitan generation?

Readers in this country know Nabokov mostly from his so-called American period—that is, the novels written in English during and after his twenty-year American exile: *Lolita*, *Pnin*, *Pale Fire*, *Ada*. Once the publication of *Lolita* opened the door, these novels enjoyed a huge *succès d'estime* and even became standard objects on high- and middlebrow bookshelves during the Sixties and Seventies, although one wonders how many truly cultured and receptive readers they found among the American bourgeoisie: one has a delicious vision of Mrs. Bridge, had she lived on another twenty years, picking up *Lolita* in a moment of vague curiosity, flipping through it with mounting perplexity and distress, and then putting it aside with distinct relief. A great many of the readers who rushed off to buy *Pale Fire* after Mary McCarthy's rave review in *The New Republic* ("*Pale Fire* is a Jack-in-the-Box, a Fabergé gem, a clockwork toy, a chess problem, an infernal machine, a trap to catch reviewers, a cat-and-mouse game, a do-it-yourself novel") must secretly have agreed more with Dwight Macdonald's assessment of it as, next to Herman Wouk's *Youngblood Hawke*, "the most unreadable novel I've read this season."

But Nabokov's American period represents only the later part of his career. There is another Nabokov, less demonic and perhaps more accessible, a Nabokov who wrote in Russian for an audience of fellow émigrés in Berlin and Paris. Having fled revolutionary Russia in 1919 at the age of twenty, with his family (Nabokov's father had been rich and politically influential in Czarist St. Petersburg), Nabokov studied at Cambridge University for two years. In 1922, the elder Nabokov was accidentally killed—by an assassin's bullet meant for someone else—and the young writer came to join his mother and siblings in Berlin, where he stayed until 1937 when the triumphs of the Nazi regime forced him to move on to Paris. In 1940 he left France and embarked for the United States, where he began to write in a new language and for a new audience. The switch from Russian to English, he wrote, was "exceedingly painful—like learning anew to handle things after losing seven or eight fingers in an explosion"—and for the rest of his life he mourned his native language, his "untrammeled, rich, and infinitely docile Russian tongue."

Not that "trammeled" is the word that springs to mind when discussing Nabokov's works in English. Yet the American novels do show a distinct stylistic change from the Russian ones, which include *Laughter in the Dark*, *Invitation to a Beheading*, *The Gift*, and *The Defense*. And while Nabokov all but abandoned the short-story form along with the Russian language, he produced over sixty stories during his eighteen years in Berlin and Paris. These, together with his few English-language stories, have now been gathered in *The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov*, edited by Nabokov's best translator (next to himself): his son, Dmitri.[3] Many of these stories have already appeared in this country in the collections *Nabokov's Dozen* (1958), *A Russian Beauty* (1973), *Tyrants Destroyed* (1975), and *Details of a Sunset* (1976); many others have never been published at all or are making their first appearance since their original publications in émigré journals like *Rul'* in Berlin and *Poslednie Novosti* in Paris.

Nabokov, with his immense ego and his disdain for the casual reader, has always inspired passionate enthusiasm from those who worship at the shrine of the artificer-God and equally passionate dislike from those who are enraged by Nabokov's preciosity and obscurity, what Richard

3 *The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov*, edited by Dmitri Nabokov; Knopf, 655 pages, $35.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Watts, Jr., called "his puckish weakness for affectation." These short stories are apt to carry surprises for members of both schools of thought. Knowing the elderly Nabokov, one would expect the young one to have been a show-off; the dominant note of these stories, however, is not arrogance but romance. The themes that would come to dominate Nabokov's work in later life—time, memory, love—also predominate in this early work, but in a less astringent guise: Nabokov was still very much a part of the romantic strain of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century literature. Memory translates to nostalgia, particularly nostalgia for a remembered and imagined Russia forever lost to the author, and Nabokov never ceased dreaming of his "wild-flowery" country, a country which, as he wrote in "Tyrants Destroyed," had been turned into

> a vast kitchen garden, where special care is lavished on turnips, cabbages, and beets; thus all the nation's passions were reduced to the passion for the fat vegetable in the good earth. A kitchen garden next to a factory with the inevitable accompaniment of a locomotive maneuvering somewhere in the background; the hopeless, drab sky of city outskirts, and everything the imagination associates with the scene: a fence, a rusted can among thistles, broken glass, excrements, a black, buzzing burst of flies under one's feet—this is the present-day image of my country.

Nabokov's nostalgia constitutes an actual attempt to regain the lost home through an intense mental effort. Memory itself is the goal, elusive in all but odd, inspired moments. One attempts to grasp the tantalizing image: "For one instant something flew open in his soul, momentarily froze still in surprise, and slammed shut" (from "Details of a Sunset") is as good a description of the process as any. Occasionally the "something" stays open. It is for such moments that the writer gropes, and Nabokov's *Speak, Memory*—one of the best autobiographies ever written—is a book built upon the pursuit of such moments. "I confess I do not believe in time," he states grandly, and proceeds to make his own attempt to bridge its chasms.

Nabokov mourns the Russia he knew, and does not scruple to express his hatred for its new masters. There are a number of revenge fantasies among these short stories: "Russian Spoken Here," in which an émigré tobacconist in Berlin secretly imprisons a Cheka agent he has recognized, and "The Razor," where an émigré barber terrorizes a Soviet thug, are works of this type. In "Tyrants Destroyed," a man contemplates the ruin of his country by an unnamed dictator (a combination of Lenin and Stalin) whom he knew as a boy, and torments himself for not having killed him then, when he had the chance.

As the Thirties progressed, German fascism became as vile a prospect to Nabokov as Soviet ignorance and brutality. In "The Leonardo" he describes the infuriating effect a studious, solitary neighbor has upon a couple of thugs who are clearly prime recruits for Hitler's armies. "It is not enough that he moves and breathes differently from other people; the trouble is that we just cannot put our finger upon the difference, cannot catch the tip of the ear by which to pull out the rabbit. Hateful is everything that cannot be palpated, measured, counted." And in one of my own favorites, "Cloud, Castle, Lake," Nabokov gives us a tale of peculiar horror wrapped up in fairy-tale whimsy.

"Cloud, Castle, Lake" is a parable on the plight of the individual who is swallowed against his will into the maw of the all-powerful Group. Vasili Ivanovich, a mild bachelor living in Germany, wins a pleasure trip at a charity ball. He hopes the trip will bring him "some wonderful, tremulous happiness," but gets his first intimation that all will not go well when, on the train, he is requested to put down his book and join the group. From then on the trip is a nightmare of enforced jollification that becomes progressively more sinister and even violent.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At the most remote point of their itinerary, Vasili Ivanovich glimpses a landscape of such perfection that he wants to lose himself in it forever.

> It was a pure, blue lake, with an unusual expression of its water. In the middle, a large cloud was reflected in its entirety. On the other side, on a hill thickly covered with verdure (and the darker the verdure, the more poetic it is), towered, arising from dactyl to dactyl, an ancient black castle. Of course, there are plenty of such views in Central Europe, but just this one—in the inexpressible and unique harmoniousness of its three principal parts, in its smile, in some mysterious innocence it had, my love! my obedient one!—was something so unique, and so familiar, and so long-promised, and it so *understood* the beholder that Vasili Ivanovich even pressed his hand to his heart, as if to see whether his heart was there in order to give it away.

But of course Vasili Ivanovich is not allowed to linger within his ideal. The triumphant Group tears the dreamer from the dreamscape and forcibly reinserts him into the baneful social entity.

Nabokov continued to express his detestation of totalitarianism in every form throughout the Forties: his story "Conversation Piece, 1945," in which a Russian émigré in Boston is invited accidentally to a meeting of Beacon Hill–type American fascists, expresses his own vision of the banality of evil, as does the novel he published two years later, *Bend Sinister*. Nabokov professed to be apolitical, and in 1962 he proudly described himself as having "never belonged to any club or group. No creed or school has had any influence on me whatsoever." But despise politics though he might, Nabokov, who lived through some of the most violent events in the most violent places of the century, could not escape them: his *oeuvre* is an oblique reflection of the dreadful history of his time.

But though Nabokov's Russian stories express both nostalgia and hatred, "nostalgia" and "hatred" are dangerous words to use of a writer—to do so is to imply that the writer indulges in whining, regrets, resentment. Such is never the case with Nabokov, of whom John Updike has said that he "writes prose the only way it should be written—that is, ecstatically." Nabokov took great joy in his world, that is clear, and his wish to express that joy permeates his fiction. "Everything in the world is beautiful," says the narrator of "Gods," "but Man only recognizes beauty if he sees it either seldom or from afar." The narrator of "Beneficence" frees himself from a consuming infatuation with a worthless woman by a sudden realization "that the world does not represent a struggle at all, or a predaceous sequence of chance events, but shimmering bliss, beneficent trepidation, a gift bestowed on us and unappreciated." Even in a story of the most extreme sorrow, "Christmas"—in which a father mourns the death of his adolescent son—an unexpected harbinger of beauty and life appears, naturally but miraculously, to the grief-stricken man.

This gift for the rhapsodic combined with a passionate fidelity to detail is characteristic of Nabokov. It is apparent in *Speak, Memory*, and some of the stories in this collection—"Mademoiselle O," "Orache," "First Love"—were to reappear in the memoir in somewhat altered form; also, the extraordinary piece "The Visit to the Museum" contains an incident that was to provide a crucial moment in *Speak, Memory*. The long and quite wonderful story "Spring in Fialta" unites several thematic strands that work their way through Nabokov's novels, including a triangle that brings to mind the Humbert/Quilty/Lolita one, in which the lover in possession functions as the narrator's grotesque double. But as a rule Nabokov's short stories open up territory which is very different from that of the later books. He was writing in another language and most of all for another audience; the mandarin tone that has annoyed so many readers is almost wholly absent. It is a great treat to have this large and varied body of work in one volume.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books

Feminist fatale

by Christina Hoff Sommers

Gloria Steinem, whose resentment of "the patriarchy" has not abated in thirty years, has aptly chosen her authorized biographer. Three years ago Carolyn Heilbrun noisily resigned her chair in Columbia University's English department because, as a woman, she felt herself targeted. "In life, as in fiction," Ms. Heilbrun told *The New York Times*, "women who speak out usually end up punished or dead. I'm lucky to escape with my pension and a year of leave." The *Times* reporter ventured to remark that things were no longer so bad. Thirty-two years ago when Heilbrun had first come to Columbia there were no tenured female professors in the English department. Now eight of its thirty-two tenured professors and a majority of its junior professors are women. Heilbrun was not impressed. "Female doesn't mean feminist," she snapped. Having "survived" her long tenure at Columbia, Heilbrun planned to devote herself full-time to writing and "speaking out." One of her first projects would be the writing of *The Education of a Woman: The Life of Gloria Steinem*.[1]

In her mystery stories (written under the name Amanda Cross) Heilbrun has parodied several women more academically distinguished than herself (among them Wellesley College's Mary Lefkowitz and Harvard University's Helen Vendler) who are not her kind of feminist. By contrast, Heilbrun is remarkably protective of Gloria Steinem, who is very much her kind of feminist and who does not threaten her professionally. Even so, Steinem is physically attractive and that provokes and disconcerts Heilbrun.

Heilbrun tells of her initial fascination with the idea of writing a biography of a woman "simultaneously the epitome of female beauty and the quintessence of female revolution" who "confronted all the shibboleths of a patriarchal culture." Calling her the most famous feminist in the country, Heilbrun is at pains to persuade readers that Steinem is a "boundary-crossing feminist" fully deserving of her renown. This undertaking requires her to fend off attacks by Steinem's feminist detractors, many of whom dismiss her as a pseudo-intellectual bimbo who would never have been famous were she not, in Heilbrun's phrase, "a feminist in a miniskirt."

Betty Friedan, whom Heilbrun portrays as ever envious of Steinem's good looks and ever unforgiving of Steinem for having superseded her as Ms. Feminist, has said: "Gloria has not advanced any new ideas in the women's movement—but she is an outstanding publicist." Friedan believes that the path Steinem has chosen is neither original with her nor the way to go: "The women's liberation movement has had enough of sexual politics." Heilbrun does not take

1 *The Education of a Woman: The Life of Gloria Steinem*, by Carolyn G. Heilbrun; The Dial Press, 451 pages, $24.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seriously the suggestion that the movement can get too much of sexual politics, for she agrees with Steinem that the dismantling of patriarchy is *the* feminist imperative.

The Education of a Woman gets passing grades as narrative. Heilbrun gives the facts of Steinem's life in an engaging manner: a difficult childhood in Toledo, Ohio; the "patriarchal" education at Smith College, which, Steinem says, demoralized her until she found her true vocation in advancing the cause of women; an idealistic year in India; an abortion in England; her early forays into journalism in New York and her work for Cesar Chavez, followed by her alliance with Norman Mailer in his mayoral campaign (she accepted the nomination to run for comptroller and later defected); "the great blinding lightbulb" that went off in her head at a Redstocking "speakout" on abortion; the brave decision to go on the road to preach her newly learned feminist gospel. Then there was the founding of *Ms.* magazine and the struggle to keep it afloat, the media fame, the fear of writing books, the "wise" therapy culminating in the publication of the best-selling *Revolution from Within*.

Despite all the assurances that Friedan never lays a glove on Steinem, *The Education of a Woman* signally fails to refute Friedan's charge that Steinem contributed no new ideas. Such a charge can be met in only one convincing way: by providing a systematic account of Steinem's "boundary-crossing" contributions. Heilbrun's considerable credentials as a scholar and literary critic are never engaged to provide a coherent outline of Steinem's views, let alone an explanation of their significance and influence or, failing that, an honest critical evaluation of their insignificance.

Indeed, the reader finally realizes that it is Heilbrun who remains fixated on Steinem as "the pretty one." I counted more than a dozen voyeuristic comments on Steinem as a "looker," on how paradoxical this was for a feminist, and how nevertheless it gave Steinem confidence and cachet. Heilbrun sees emblematic significance in the contrast between Steinem's "father's obesity and her own eternal slimness." We learn over and over again of the various ways that the revolutionary feminist embodied in the slim attractive figure presented "a living contradiction [that] worried the pigeonholers." According to Heilbrun, the media punished Steinem for presenting them with this contradiction. "Since she could not easily be caricatured as ugly, the press and many of her detractors trivialized Steinem as glamorous and sexy."

The topic of Steinem's incongruous attractiveness is banal, but Heilbrun clearly feels that its significance has not yet been plumbed. She delicately suggests that Steinem unknowingly paid a high price for being so good-looking a feminist:

> There are questions she had never asked herself: What would her life have been had she been homely, however spirited and brave? Perhaps in that case she would have evolved into the writer she seemed always to have wished to be. . . . What would her life have been if she had inherited, as her sister did, their father's weight problem, which no amount of discipline and dieting could ever reduce to slimness?

Here one can almost hear Heilbrun asking, "Would she then have been capable of becoming the writer and thinker I have become?" It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Heilbrun's constant fussing over Steinem's looks and slimness is both a way of indulging her obsessive bemusement with the "paradoxical" idea that a genuine feminist can be so glamorous as well as a way of beclouding and finally skirting the distressing issues concerning Steinem's importance that had been raised by Friedan on the Right and the radical feminists on the Left.

Three-quarters into the book, Heilbrun suddenly concedes that Steinem's effectiveness as a speaker and writer was confined to her being "ever ready to expound first principles" to those who were just discovering feminism. And she says that even Steinem's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

most devoted friends found it difficult to understand how she was able to repeat the same ideas without subjecting them to criticism.

> She had a way of sticking to fundamentals that was beyond the comprehension of some of those who worked with her on the magazine and wanted to refine and question those fundamentals. Paradoxically, her talent for tolerating restatement and for making it exciting would, by the time she reached her sixties, run the risk of imprisoning her in concepts too little reconsidered.

Friedan had merely said that Steinem was unoriginal. Now Heilbrun indicts her more severely by expressing reservations about Steinem's ability to take a critical look at the "first principles" she keeps repeating and repeating. One might add that nothing in Steinem's *oeuvre* confines such reservations to the period of Steinem's seventh decade. Except for her forays into the warm, murky shoals of the self-esteem movement, Steinem has been a indefatigable feminist activist whose line hasn't changed in twenty-five years. Nor is there anything "paradoxical" in this. For as Heilbrun herself finally comes around to suggesting, Steinem is an attractive, resourceful, and loyal party hack, to whom the gender feminists are immeasurably indebted for her immense political labors. Though Heilbrun's private views about Steinem's intellectual limitations are not altogether suppressed, the biography lacks integrity for Heilbrun had earlier given the reader the impression that Steinem was a bold and innovative thinker. She never expressly disavows these intimations.

Having dealt at length with the complaints of critics like Friedan and the Redstockings (the latter complained that Steinem was promoting a "watered-down," bourgeois kind of feminism and even accused her of being a CIA operative), Heilbrun scornfully makes short shrift of a third, more recent, group of adversaries. These, says Heilbrun, are women

> who call themselves feminists but who do not in fact *like* women. It is always in defense of men that such women speak, and it is by this defense that they can be identified. Their accusations that women like Steinem hate men are a neat reversal of their own hatred of women, unconscious though it may sometimes be. Never mind them, Steinem now says. . . . What we have is one another—and it is to one another that we must speak and offer encouragement and support.

Who are these male-defending misogynist women that "trash" Steinem? They are, says Heilbrun, "self-declared feminists who apparently ached for the publicity Steinem seemed able so easily to evoke . . . women [like] Christina Hoff Sommers [and] Katie Roiphe . . . [who] seemed to base their assaults on their defense of men against the hatred feminists of Steinem's generation supposedly felt for men."

Later on Heilbrun adds the redoubtable Camille Paglia to the enemies list. But neither I nor Roiphe had ever said of Steinem that she hates men; nor had Paglia. Heilbrun cites Paglia's remark that she herself is "a better role model for women today than all these sex-phobic women." When I asked Paglia whom she meant, she told me that the sex-phobic women she had in mind did not include Gloria Steinem but did include Robin Morgan and Carolyn Heilbrun! "Steinem always exploited her sexuality to attract men. . . . She has used men as a social escort service for her entire life. She is a party animal. There isn't a rich-bitch table that woman has not sat at."

Heilbrun misses the point of the quarrel that Paglia, Roiphe, and I have with the kind of feminism that Steinem purveys. We are not much interested in whether Steinem "really likes" men. Nor are we centrally concerned with defending men. We strongly feel it is women—far more than men—who need to be defended from feminists like Steinem and Heilbrun. Steinem and Heilbrun and their sisters-in-arms may have one another, but in all their talk of sisterhood we cannot help hearing how conde-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

scending they are to all the women who "fail" to have achieved the level of feminist consciousness *they* regard as appropriate and necessary.

At a 1973 League of Women Voters convention Steinem referred to married women as "part-time prostitutes" exploited by their husbands for their labors and sexual attentions. League members were shocked and offended. Steinem explains, "I never said married women were prostitutes, but I did compare traditional marriage to prostitution." Heilbrun offers assurances that Steinem "always did take great care never to accuse women, but to the listener at that convention, the distinction was a delicate one." To me, to Paglia, and to a growing number of feminists who are not in the business of "critiquing" women for being dupes of the patriarchy, it is no distinction at all. And why should Steinem be taking "great care never to accuse women" unless she is striving not to betray an attitude that many women would find patronizing and hurtful? Disdain for the average woman routinely surfaces despite all the care taken not to accuse women—putting the lie to all the cozy talk of sisterhood. Consider Steinem's unsisterly verdict on the millions of evangelical Christian women. Steinem sees them as women who have chosen security over authenticity: "the promise is safety in return for obedience, respectability in return for self-respect and freedom—a sad bargain."

Steinem herself knows a thing or two about how to recruit adherents by promises of safety and self-respect. The feminist religious orthodoxy she preaches promises safety in a sisterhood that offers unhappy women a venue where they can build their self-esteem and attain an "authenticity" enjoyed by no other group of women. Heilbrun conscientiously spreads the gospel by telling readers of the "many thousands" of lost souls Steinem has "rescued."

If we discount collections of articles, the one serious book Steinem has written is *Revolution from Within*, a best seller that was panned by feminist intellectuals as distracting from sexual politics but even more for its pop psychology and platitudinous self-help nostrums. To these criticisms Heilbrun adds her own doubts that "searching for the inner child is the best way to go about remaking one's life." Heilbrun tells us that Steinem found these insider reviews carping, but she was "most disturbed" by them.

Despite her own strong reservations about *Revolution from Within*, Heilbrun calls it "wholly a feminist book." She defends its crassness by saying that Steinem "had chosen never to be an 'intellectual.'" She excuses its lack of cogency by noting that by the 1990s Steinem had decided that her writing would follow the maxim: "*Express, don't persuade*."

Steinem posted "Express, don't persuade" on her bulletin board, and Heilbrun seems not to worry that with this Steinem has arrogated to herself an illegitimate license to speak out without having to present arguments. The motto announces a principled romantic abandonment of "establishment" masculinist logic. To consider that as "wholly feminist" is to accede to the old German thinkers like Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who said: "Man reduces all that is in and for him to clear conceptions, and discovers it only through reasoning . . . Woman, on the other hand, has a natural sentiment of what is good, true and proper." Fichte offers this left-handed compliment to women in the course of arguing against ever granting them the right to vote. In her latest book, appropriately titled *Moving Beyond Words*, a defiant Gloria Steinem takes pride in abjuring persuasive reason. She boasts of an increased rebelliousness and expressiveness, a "healthy anger that . . . loosens my tongue, leaves me ever more impatient and energized. . . . At last I'm beginning to ignore the rules altogether . . . messages I once heard only with my head go straight to my heart."

So what in the final analysis is Gloria Steinem's philosophy? Heilbrun could have summed it up for us by quoting from a Steinem poem included in her very recent essay "Doing Sixty."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Women on campus
Wear "masculine" thoughts
And look to daddy for
Good grades.

Married women
Give their bodies away
And wear their husbands'
Wishes.

Religious women
Cover sinful bodies
And ask redemption from god
Not knowing
She is within them.

* * *

Dear Goddess: I pray for the courage
To walk naked
At any age.
To wear red and purple,
To be unladylike,
Inappropriate,
Scandalous and
Incorrect
To the very end.

One may applaud this or find it acutely embarrassing, but one cannot deny its triteness. Steinem's essay would be more aptly titled "Keeping On Doing the Sixties."

Heilbrun's mainly adulatory biography ends by comparing Steinem to Kilroy. "She is, like the mythical Kilroy of World War II, essential and ubiquitous: Steinem was here."

The more than four hundred pages that precede that breezy final sentence certainly attest to Gloria Steinem's "ubiquity," but nothing in them warrants calling her "essential." Despite all her best efforts, Heilbrun could not prevent herself from demonstrating that Friedan was right about Steinem all along. Camille Paglia is fond of quoting her friend Heidi Schmidt, who said: "Once we needed her, and now we're stuck with her." After reading Carolyn Heilbrun's life of Gloria Steinem, not a few readers will be asking themselves, "Did we ever need her?"

Sutherland rides again

Hadley Arkes
The Return of George Sutherland:
Restoring the Jurisprudence
of Natural Rights.
Princeton University Press,
295 pages, $29.95

reviewed by Louis Auchincloss

George Sutherland, a senator from Utah and an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court from his appointment by Harding in 1922 to his retirement in 1938, has, despite his recognized legal scholarship, his early espousal of women's rights, and his ringingly liberal opinion in the Scottsboro case, been largely associated in the minds of law professors and historians with three of his colleagues on the high bench: Willis Van Devanter, Pierce Butler, and James C. McReynolds. Sutherland and this trio, with the occasional assistance of Owen Roberts, constituted the majority on the court who struck down much of the early social legislation of the New Deal. The "four horsemen," as they were derisively labeled by contemporary liberal papers, were depicted as standing like so many Horatii at the bridge of progress, barring all efforts to lift the nation out of its dark depression and forcing the president to the desperate remedy of his court-packing bill. What Roosevelt failed to accomplish in this too peremptory fashion—his bill would have added up to six new seats to the court—he succeeded in effecting by later appointments, and the Constitution was duly stretched and fitted to the needs of his brain trust.

The "horsemen" were never credited by the liberal press with any motive but a curmudgeonly desire to preserve at all costs the property rights of big business and the economic system known as *laissez faire*. As G. Edward White put it in *The American Judicial Tradition*:

> Their presence was offensive, not because they shaped the Constitution to fit their precon-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> ceived views—all judges do that—but because those views were out of touch with contemporary conditions. The remedy [court-packing] was not to eliminate judicial glosses on the Constitution—those were inevitable—but to change the court's personnel.

Certainly this attitude was "politically correct" when I was in law school in 1939. It was very much the thing to sneer at the old dodos and affirm that we could get to heaven through the wide open gate of the commerce clause. But time is a great revisionist. Now we read economic historians who tell us that the New Deal itself was relieved to be rid of such awkward early experiments as the National Industrial Recovery and the Agricultural Adjustment Acts, and Philip Howard in his currently best-selling *The Death of Common Sense* makes us wonder if the social gains thought to have been achieved were worth the crushing load of federal and state regulations under which we groan. And certainly the recent Republican victories at the polls oblige us to face the perhaps inarticulate but angrily reiterated demands of millions that the role of government in their daily lives be somehow reduced.

All of which shows that it is the right time to re-examine the role played in our Constitutional history by the "four horsemen," which Hadley Arkes, professor of jurisprudence at Amherst College and the author of *Beyond the Constitution*, has clearly and cogently and even dramatically done in this study. He chooses to see Sutherland as the legal visionary who was very much the leader of the other conservatives on the court and one of the profoundest thinkers in the history of our jurisprudence, and I daresay he could prove this if he had the space to examine a greater portion of the justice's myriad opinions over his tenure of sixteen years. But as he cannot do this, and as he picks out many flaws in the opinions he does analyze, one is left with the impression that Sutherland's credit could well be divided with the others. But this doesn't really matter. What Arkes's book is basically about is expressed in its subtitle, and the issue of "natural rights" is viewed as a debate in which all the judges are involved.

The famous case of *Schechter Poultry Corp. v. United States*, in which the court in 1935 invalidated the National Industrial Recovery Act, is central to the issue. In effect, by this act, the government purported to enact a national code of labor under the pretense that it was not legislating at all. Owners, managers, and employers would decide "voluntarily" to join together under the banner of the blue eagle. Of course, there would be punitive taxation for those who declined. The result, for those who cooperated, were codes of infinite detail. Not only wages and hours of work and maximum and minimum numbers of laborers had to be set; there had to be regulations to deal with false advertising, selling of unfit produce, defamation of creditors, discrimination among customers by rebates. There seemed no end to it. As counsel for Schechter said in their brief, the codes "sought to regulate human activities literally from the cradle to the grave and beyond."

Now how was this unconstitutional? As Arkes says: "Let us count the ways." In the first place there was the improper delegation of legislative powers to the executive. The president could write what codes he wished, and furthermore he could redelegate this power to groups and associations that were outside the government. But even then there was no stability as to what the law was; the codes could be altered at will. As Huey Long protested to the Senate, after reminding his colleagues that everyone is presumed to know the law: "I will take back everything I have said if a single member of the Senate will hold up his hand and tell me he has read two thirds of the regulations that carry with them penal provisions putting one in jail if he does not observe them."

The question of delegation ran into the further problem of the commerce clause. In the Schechter case the poultry may have moved in interstate commerce, but that movement had ceased before the Schechter

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Company's work of killing and crating had begun. But in this as in all of the major New Deal projects the government refused to be limited. It extended the reach of the clause into the state to cover manufacture as well as transportation, to cover, in brief, virtually every aspect of every business, large and small. What had happened was that the government now presumed to manage the nation's economy in the public interest.

The position of the opposition, as stated by Arkes, runs roughly thus: the power to regulate commerce is the power to prescribe the rules by which commerce must be "lawfully" conducted, and the "lawful" boundaries of commerce touch the boundaries of the decent and just. The law would do for commerce what it would do more generally for all other exercises of personal freedom: it would mark the things we may not legitimately claim in the name of our freedom. The commerce clause reflected a decision to extend to the Union the moral restraints that were traditionally supplied, for local commerce, by the common law and the laws of the state. The moral aspects of the clause are amply shown in the many decisions of the court upholding measures to restrain commerce in slavery, prostitution, lotteries, and liquor.

Viewed in this light, the commerce clause seems more sympathetic and less hostile to what the author defines as "natural rights" which existed, according to some theorists, before the passage of the Constitution or the forming of the Union: the right to make a living at an ordinary calling, the right not to have one's assets seized in an arbitrary way, the right to enter into a binding contract, even with a stronger party than oneself. These rights should not be abrogated without a compelling public reason, and such a reason is not provided by a government's desire to regulate the whole national economy, to tell every businessman how to run his business, and to foster unions on reluctant corporations.

Arkes does not see why the freedom of a man to support his family and earn a living is not a freedom with as much moral standing as that of a man in a park making a political speech, but he is well aware that this is not the view of most modern jurists. "Judges who would test any regulation on speech in the most demanding way would suspend their critical faculties when it came, say, to judging a local regulation for the licensing of cab drivers. In this exercise of judicial restraint they were willing to acquiesce, for the most casual reasons, to measures that would restrain the liberty of many ordinary folk in the innocent calling of driving a cab."

The school of Hugo Black did not believe in "natural rights." If they were not explicitly granted in the Constitution they did not exist, so far, anyway, as the federal system was concerned. To the liberal mind any "natural right" to make a living in an ordinary occupation undercut the liberty of the government to engage in economic experiments. "For Black, and the jurisprudence he described, there would have been no question about the competence of a state legislature to decide on just when the community could cast the protections of the law around unborn children." Yet when *Roe v. Wade* came before the court, even the justices who had tended to follow Black felt constrained to find a new right (was it "natural"?) in the novel constitutional privilege of "privacy."

If Franklin Roosevelt had found Sutherland a foe in the establishment of his social programs, he would have found him a staunch ally in supporting his international maneuvering in the years between the outbreak of war in Europe and Pearl Harbor. But Sutherland had retired in 1938. However, the broad executive prerogatives over military deployments, even in the absence of a declaration of war, were well supported by Sutherland's opinion in the landmark case *United States v. Curtiss Wright Corp.* in 1936. There it was a matter of upholding the power of the commander-in-chief to bar the sale of arms to either faction in the Chaco war in Bolivia. The power came not from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Constitution but from the very nature of the polity.

> In this vast external realm, with its important, complicated, delicate and manifold problems, the president alone has the power to speak or listen as a representative of the nation. He *makes* treaties with the advice and consent of the Senate; but he alone negotiates. Into the field of negotiation the Senate cannot intrude; and Congress itself is powerless to invade it.

Hadley Arkes leads us into the deepest jungles of constitutional thought, where some of his readers will feel it may be time to turn back, but his is a stimulating safari.

Kingdom & exile

Albert Camus The First Man.
Translated by David Hapgood.
Knopf, 325 pages, $23

reviewed by Renee Winegarten

When Camus looked back over his early autobiographical writings, where he had tried to depict his feelings about his family background of poverty and cultural deprivation in Algiers, he felt very dissatisfied. He said he was only too conscious of the immaturity of these essays: he even believed that if he did not make another attempt at this subject he would have achieved nothing. So Camus began thinking about *The First Man*, a novel that was to be different from anything he had written before. It would be a "traditional novel," although he had doubts about whether he was really a "traditional" writer. The new work was to be the truly authentic novel of his maturity.

Propelled by the tragedy of the French-Algerian conflict (1954–62), with its twin horrors of torture and terror, Camus was aiming at an epic on a Tolstoyan scale, his own personal *War and Peace*. This book would at last fully explain *his* Algeria to the French, and especially to his erstwhile friends, those self-righteous Left intellectuals who had moved from utter indifference toward the colony to support for the Algerian terrorists. Where the youthful essays had been marked by his well-known reserve and discretion, the new work would be distinguished by simplicity and directness. He said that he aimed to free himself from worrying about art and form, to find once again what he called "direct contact." Moreover, he declared, "I am going to speak of those I loved," and he expressed his "profound joy" at the prospect.

In his briefcase, found at the scene of his death in a senseless car accident in January 1960, were the 144 manuscript pages of all that remains of the ambitious project of *The First Man*. They are written in a barely decipherable minute scribble, without punctuation, and the impression they leave is of an intense unstoppable outpouring of memory, an overflow of hitherto repressed passionate feeling. At the time of his death, the stance Camus had taken—in vain—for reconciliation in Algeria, followed by his agonized decision to stay silent, had left him isolated. Although he was "a classic," read at school and university, his reputation in France was now not as high as once it had been. Some even thought that he was already dead and buried under the consecration of the Nobel Prize in Literature. He had published no important work of fiction since *The Fall* in 1956.

Consequently, his widow and his friends decided not to risk publication of an uncorrected fragment. But over thirty years later matters were different. The once fashionable Left intellectuals were discredited. Sartre was no longer the dominating guru. Camus the supreme humanist was widely seen to have been on the right lines after all. At this point, in 1994, his daughter opted to publish the manuscript as it stood: where words are missing the gap is shown. Punctuation has been added, together with a few explanatory footnotes and relevant passages from the author's notebooks. It is this edition which is now presented in translation.

There seems little doubt that, when revising, Camus would have modified the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tone of direct autobiography with his characteristic reticence and irony. Yet what he has left us is a document so charged and so consistently moving that it must vary the light in which we view him and his sensibility. The French Algerian factor in Camus can no longer be seen merely as one element in his makeup but rather as the dominant element. I do not think that the shattering effect of these pages is due entirely either to the tragic circumstances in which they were found, or to our contemporary inclination to prefer the torso to the statue, and to favor the unfinished sketch over the completed artwork. Certainly, Camus had written about his childhood, about his impoverished mother, grandmother, and uncles and their endless round of extenuating labor under a harsh sun. In any case, the facts were known from the excellent 1979 biography of Camus by Herbert Lottman, who had indeed seen the manuscript of *The First Man*. But now we can read these pages for ourselves, in all their unvarnished simplicity and unadorned passionate feeling. And we cannot be other than struck by the concentrated attention to minute and vivid detail that is the mark of the great writer.

The First Man is dedicated to Camus's illiterate mother: "To you who will never be able to read this book." In a note that embraces the author as well as his protagonist and alter ego, Jacques Cormery, we learn that "what he wanted most in the world, which was for his mother to read everything that was his life and his being, that was impossible. His love, his only love, would be forever speechless." The new novel was to be Camus's Flaubertian-style sentimental education, where private sensuality and public political upheavals are intermingled. It takes place on several levels: in Cormery's childhood, in his life as an adult and Don Juan, in the historical past of his family and his country, and from time to time in the present of parachute patrols and the indiscriminate killing of civilians during the French-Algerian war.

Camus's widowed mother, like Cormery's, worked as a cleaning woman. She, too, was partially deaf, and she suffered from a speech impediment. Lottman showed that —unknown to Camus—this last disability was the result of trauma on being suddenly informed of her husband's death in battle in 1914, and thoughtlessly given shell fragments taken from his body. Unable to encompass an idea, after a day's hard toil she would sit vacantly looking out of the window of the cramped apartment, which she shared with her tyrannical mother, her retarded brother, and her two sons. To young Jacques Cormery his mother seemed almost indifferent, passive in the hands of the domineering grandmother, who had also worked since she was a child, and who was not averse to dealing out blows to punish the lively boy. The women work without interruption because not to do so means less to eat.

As a child Jacques Cormery feels doubts about his mother's affection, then gradually perceives her unspoken tenderness. In the notes, the mother is conceived in terms of Dostoevsky's saintly "idiot," Prince Myshkin, and even as suffering Christ. For it is plain that the novel is an attempt at reparation, a search for forgiveness. It records the pain of the moment at school when, asked to state his parent's profession on a form, Cormery puts "domestic servant," feels ashamed, and then ashamed at his shame. According to Lottman, young Camus would later tell college friends, who never visited his home, that his mother was mentally ill and living in Oran. "No, I am not a good son: a good son is one who stays put. I've traveled far and wide, I've betrayed her with trivialities, fame, a hundred women." The mature Camus could guiltily see himself as an insensitive brute, and he suggests that the members of his family, judged at their true worth, were really far better than he was.

His was the common fate of those who receive an education that takes them out of their milieu. Camus was cherished by his primary schoolteacher, Louis Germain

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Monsieur Bernard in the story), who recognized at once the boy's pleasure in learning. (The author had dedicated his Nobel address to his old schoolmaster, and in the appendix to the novel there is a touching exchange of letters between them.) When the grandmother wanted the child to start work instead of studying for the *baccalauréat*, the dignified teacher decided to pay a visit in order to explain, to her and to the boy's mother, how a scholarship would enable him to better his prospects. Understanding that they could not afford to pay for extra lessons, he gave his services gratis. So Camus passed to the *lycée* and into a new and wider world. Louis Germain had changed his life. But of course there was a price to pay, as Cormery shows, in youthful alienation from his family.

Part of the draft novel is concerned with Cormery's vain search for traces of the shadowy father he never knew. In a sense it is also a search for himself. His father, like the author's, was killed at the battle of the Marne in 1914, when the younger son was not yet a year old. He had never even set foot in France before, just like most of his comrades, including the Arabs, who were thrown unequipped and unprepared against the German guns. Camus was not the only one to be convinced that the war with its huge losses governed the lives of generations to come.

The manuscript opens in 1913 with the harrowing journey made by Cormery's parents into the Algerian countryside in a horse-drawn wagon: the long-suffering heavily pregnant wife, the elder child, the birth of the boy with the help of Arab and French strangers in Mondovi, in the Bône region, Camus's birthplace, where the father had just been appointed to manage the vineyards. When planning the novel, Camus visited Mondovi with his elder brother, but could find no memory of his parents. As long ago as 1947, he had made a pilgrimage to Saint-Brieuc in Brittany—like Cormery—to visit his father's grave. As it happened, his philosophy teacher and friend, the writer Jean Grenier (Victor Malan in the draft), whom Camus acknowledged as his spiritual father, had been brought up near the place where his true father was buried. All that Camus/Cormery took from seeing the grave was the sudden fall into passing time, the realization that he himself was now older than his father had been when he was killed. It was not much use asking questions of his mother and his relations about his father: in the poverty of their outlook, they harbored no memories. Camus holds that the ignorant laboring poor have no space and time for the luxury of memory.

And that is, too, the fate of his paternal ancestors and their like, the indigent French immigrants to Algeria in the nineteenth century. No records of these humble people were kept in Algeria. Camus firmly believed that his father's family had emigrated to Algeria in 1871 from Alsace, after choosing France when Alsace was ceded to Germany. He gave Cormery the same ancestry. In fact—as Lottman showed after consulting French archives—his father's family left Bordeaux to settle in Algeria at the time of its conquest in 1830. A further wave was lured to the colony after the defeat of the revolutionaries in 1848, with promises of land and a golden future. They arrived after a debilitating journey to find nothing but a few army outposts, and many of them died like flies, from disease, hardship, and marauding Arabs. These immigrants, too, left no trace. In his novel Camus seeks to give an idea of their wretched destiny.

His mother's family, equally poor, came from Mahon on the Spanish island of Minorca, to join the vibrant melting pot of French, Spaniards, Italians, Jews, and Arabs that Camus found so attractive. In a sharp dig at his former friends, the Parisian Left intellectuals, Camus points out how different is their notion of the proletariat from the reality of these ordinary unsung individuals. Too honest to overlook their failings, only too well aware of their casual cruelties, he shows how, in their gut reaction of hostility to other races in the quest for work, they were "fighting for the priv-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ilege of servitude." As a journalist in 1939 Camus had seen the Arab children of Tizi-Ouzou in rags as they fought with dogs for the contents of a dustbin. He had expressed his outrage at the powerful French colonialists who blocked necessary reforms, the exploiters and oppressors. He wanted to make it clear that the underprivileged to whom his own family belonged were not among them.

What is unforgettable in the draft novel is the presence of Algeria itself, in all its harshness, strangeness, and beauty. Camus had written lyrically elsewhere about his country, which he did not want to lose, but here the personal tone is more marked, perhaps because he grasped that he was writing about a doomed world. A mere two years after his death, when Algeria became independent, most of the French Algerians fled to France. Algeria would ultimately lapse into the civil war between the government and the Islamic extremists that Camus had foreseen and dreaded.

Here, in the draft novel, is the Algeria he knew and loved, not least the teeming streets of the poor district of Belcourt. Here are the sights and sounds, tastes and odors; the delights of the small boy, the games with his friends, the free pleasures of the sun and the seaside, the rare joys of a hunting trip with his uncle. How dazzling are the descriptions of animals, of fruits, flowers, and trees, the powerful wind, the sudden torrential rains! There is the enthralling daily tramride to the *lycée* that embraces the whole arc of the bay of Algiers in early light and at dusk. Everything is recalled and projected with sensual intensity and avidity for life (doubtless enhanced by the tuberculosis that undermined Camus at seventeen). It seems almost as if we have trod those streets with the boy and his friends. Were these rich memories faithfully those of the child he had been? inquires Camus/Cormery with unfailing honesty. Whether they are faithful or not, the writing bears the stamp of total conviction.

Who is "the first man"? It is Camus/Cormery, alienated by his education and talent from his misty past and his milieu. Moreover, the obscure hardworking French Algerians, like the ancestors and members of the author's family, without private and public memory, are each "the first man." With the approaching demise of French Algeria, the theme blends with Camus's enduring anxiety about death and nothingness. All the same, in the draft novel, the voiceless are given a highly potent voice. In a letter to his friend Jean de Maisonseul in 1937, Camus had observed: "It is my heart and my innermost being that have written well, not my intellect." That is certainly true of what is left of this searingly poignant document.

Quintessence of Quine

W. V. Quine
From Stimulus to Science.
Harvard University Press,
116 pages, $22.95

reviewed by Jenny Teichman

This little book is based on the Ferrater Mora lectures given by Quine in 1990. In his preface he writes:

> The Ferrater Mora lectures are a semiannual event at the Universitat de Girona, in Catalonia, honoring the memory of the late philosopher and novelist Josep María Ferrater Mora. The lecturer meets a selected group of some forty auditors ten times, over a period of two weeks, for a total of twenty-odd hours of lectures and discussion. Four eminent colleagues are invited along with the lecturer to participate in the discussion.

In 1990 the four additional Eminences were Donald Davidson, Burton Dreben, Dagfinn Føllesdal, and Roger Gibson.

Chapter One, "Days of Yore," starts with a seven-page history of philosophy. That's followed by a description of Russell and Whitehead's attempt to construct mathematics from minimal beginnings. There is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

no sign, here, that Quine sees anything problematic about either their project or their actual construction. The chapter ends with an account of Rudolf Carnap's somewhat similar attempt, in *Der logische Aufbau der Welt* (1928), to construct knowledge (science) from minimal beginnings.

Chapter Two, "Naturalism," describes Quine's own try at constructing science on a small foundation. Carnap had taken sensory phenomena as the basis for "the logical construction of the world." Quine rejects this version of the epistemological project, not because it won't work but because it allows the possibility that not everything in the world is material. His own option is to assume that everything that exists is physical and to ask: How do human beings construct knowledge (science) out of experience? How do they acquire the language needed to so much as mention physical objects? He posits a minimum set of the physical items that have eventually to be explained: "rays and waves and nerve endings." The proposed foundation for knowledge of the physical world is itself made up of physical things.

Reductive philosophy never seems to work. Someone once said that the Universe was too big a rabbit for Carnap to pull out of his phenomenalist hat, and it is surely also too big to pull out of "rays and waves and nerve endings." Be that as it may, in no time at all we find Quine sneakily beefing up his basic physical bricks with some extremely theoretical cement: viz, dispositions, innateness, induction, and evolution.

Chapter Three, "Reification," examines the linguistic differentiations needed before creatures can have such thoughts as "all ravens are black" and "if lightning occurs, thunder will occur." The idea is to explain the origins of the differentiations by looking at biology and child psychology. One might wonder how much of the material here is empirically based. One might ask, nit-pickingly, whether Quine is engaging in armchair science, in *a priori* neurology. In the bibliography all the texts, bar two, are on mathematics, logic, or computational theory, the exceptions being J. B. Watson's *Psychology* (itself an armchair work) and Piaget's *Genetic Epistemology*. There's nothing on biology as such. Still, I think one must assume that there is empirical evidence behind Quine's assertions about neurology and evolution. He just happens not to mention it.

Years ago Quine attacked the analytic-synthetic distinction in a paper called "Two Dogmas of Empiricism." Many philosophers have since said that he demolished the distinction once and for all. Yet those very same philosophers continue to surreptitiously rely on the supposedly discredited notions. Why so? Well, the analytic-synthetic distinction is not a solitary isolated target. It belongs to a family of concepts whose other members include the empirical versus the logical; the *a priori* versus the *a posteriori*; the probable, the possible, and the necessary; implication and evidence; inference and experiment; and so on and so on. That *family* of distinctions will never be abolished because philosophy can't do without it. It's interesting to see (shock, horror) that on page 45 Quine produces his own definition of the analytic-synthetic distinction! The account is psychologistic, but since his whole project is based on the axiom that there are hugely important connections between logic and psychology it looks as if the distinction has now been resuscitated by its chief detractor.

Chapter Four presents a traditional, i.e., quasi-Popperian, quasi-Hempelian view of the relationship between observation and theory; viz, respectable theories can always be tested by observation, so all theoretical statements must imply observation statements. Hence we need to ask: What does "imply" mean? What is implication? Quine defines the concept *via* elementary predicate logic. He claims that formal logic originates naturally in the histories of individual children as they learn their native languages.

After defining implication, our author turns to a number of related topics in philosophical logic. He considers ways to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

define mathematics and set theory and logic itself. He also looks at the paradoxes seemingly generated by the concept of truth, and at the problem of semantics and the question of intentionality.

The somewhat brief remarks that make up chapters five through eight are undoubtedly thought-provoking—readers might notice the several provokingly disparate descriptions of mathematics, for example—but the connection, if any, between the first and second halves of the book is not very clear.

What of the overall project? I haven't space to discuss Carnap's term "*Aufbau*," but the (usual) English translation, "construction," is a weasel word indeed. A building, such as a skyscraper, is a construction, but construction is also an activity, a trade; it is the kind of work carried out by bricklayers, for instance. What then is meant by the expression "The logical construction of the world"? Are we talking about the way the world just *is*? Or about the way we construct (create) it? The first alternative is Realism, the second is not, and the alternatives are not compatible. Now look at "The logical construction of knowledge (about the world)." Is this "construction" an entity or an activity? For a Realist (or, anyway, for one type of Realist), "the logical construction of our knowledge of the external world" is something to be discovered by inquiring into the nature of the world plus the way language hooks onto it. If, however, you hold that "construction (of the world)" means "making (the world)," you are not a philosophical Realist.

Quine's account seems to me to combine both senses of "construction." In other words, he presents himself in this book as a Realist Non-Realist or a Non-Realist Realist. Strange beasts, these.

Reading *From Stimulus to Science* reminded me a bit of long-ago encounters with the Pre-Socratic fragments. One discovered that Thales thought that everything is made of water and that Anaxiwhoosit said that the world is made of fire, or lemon pips, or whatever, but one could never discover *why* they believed those things. An apt subtitle for *From Stimulus to Science* would be: "Several Things Believed by Quine (But Not Argued For by Him)." Russell told the young Wittgenstein that he needed a slave to think up some arguments in favor of his conclusions; he could have said much the same thing about the older Quine. Yet here the absence of argumentation is a kind of plus because it means this book will be useful to anyone who needs to find out, fairly quickly, about the conclusions reached by an eminent American philosopher now in his ninth decade.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Notebook

In memoriam: Edward Shils, 1910–1995

by H. R. Trevor-Roper

The name of Edward Shils is not to be found in *Who's Who* or in any of the usual directories of prominent persons. This can hardly be through inadvertence. Though so active in the public world of learning, he was, I think, a very private person, not very easy to know. I count it as one of the rewards of my interesting and varied experience as Master of Peterhouse that it gave me the opportunity to know him and become his friend.

He was of course already known to me by repute. As a friend of Professor John U. Nef, the American historian of the British Coal Industry, I had learned about the Committee on Social Thought, of which both were founder members. I had been involved, from an early date, with the Congress for Cultural Freedom and its somewhat controversial history, in which he played a part, and with the excellent periodicals—*Der Monat*, *Encounter*, *Preuves*, *Cuadernos*—which it sustained. But it was through Peterhouse that I came to know and appreciate him personally. Though he was formed intellectually in Chicago, which remained his American base, Peterhouse became his other home. For his last twenty-five years it was his forward station for missionary journeys into Europe and beyond.

It would be presumptuous in me to speak of his professional work as a sociologist. Others can do that. I will merely note that he came to that study from outside, and rather late; which perhaps, in general, is no bad thing. Sociology is a subject for graduate, not undergraduate study: it requires a base of general education. But at Pennsylvania State University Shils did not take a graduate course. After his first degree in liberal arts he became a social worker in Philadelphia. Did that practical experience start him off? Was that "field-work" at the "grass-roots" the source of his later interest in "the primary group," that lowest compact body in organized society? I do not know. However that my be, it was at the University of Chicago, to which he was afterward attracted, that he discovered his vocation, there that the statue was found in the block of marble. And indeed, in what better school could it be found? Was it not in a sausage factory in Chicago that the greatest of modern sociologists, Max Weber, had received the illumination which led him to his most famous work? Shils was a great admirer of Max Weber and would collaborate with Talcott Parsons, the American high-priest of Weberism, who rendered the doctrine of the Master so much more obscure in English than it had been in German. Shils began his career as a sociologist by translating the works of German scholars—Weber, Mannheim, Ernst Fränkel, and others. In Chicago he was in good company: many able sociologists were working

This commemorative address was delivered at the memorial ceremony for Edward Shils in the Peterhouse chapel, Cambridge, on May 10, 1995.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there, creating a distinct tradition, more German-oriented, less respectful of classical liberalism than in the universities of the East Coast: the tradition which would be reflected in the Committee on Social Thought, founded by President Hutchins after the Second World War.

But meanwhile there had been that war. During it, Shils had served in the American army and had been attached to the British army. He was a member of the OSS, the embryo of the later CIA, and had interrogated German prisoners-of-war, an experience which added to his stock of sociological ideas. For why, he asked, had the German army, in spite of its crushing defeats after 1943, preserved its morale, its cohesion? Not, he concluded, because of the doctrines and the propaganda of the Nazi party, not because of the effective authority of its commanders, but rather because of the social solidarity of the ordinary soldiers, who were held together by traditional bonds, by loyalty to one another under the protective leadership of their NCOs and, to a lesser extent, their junior officers. This was the doctrine of "the primary group," to which I have already referred. It also contained the idea—Shils's version of the idea—of the social function of tradition.

Shils would write much about tradition. To some thinkers—to the liberal heirs of the Enlightenment—tradition is, by definition, an irrational inheritance from the dead past, a mere residue of obsolete beliefs and customs which an enlightened society should discard as an impediment to reason and progress. Shils dissented. For him there was no such clear dichotomy. Tradition, he thought, is far more complex than that: it is necessary to society, necessary to the continuity of rational as well as irrational thought. Scientific research and material progress themselves depend on tradition—their own tradition—which is therefore indispensable in a healthy society. Deeply concerned for the Western values of rationality, freedom, and progress, Shils was dismayed by the threat which they now faced: the threat posed by the absolute individualism into which Western Liberalism had degenerated. This degeneration shocked him, and at one time he felt disgusted by intellectuals as a class. They seemed to him to have betrayed, and to be seeking to destroy, the necessary condition of their own continuous function. But then he discovered a redeeming force. He found it in the continuity of a particular group of intellectuals which he could admire, "the scientific community."

So he became the champion of science and of its "world-wide community." That community, he decided, was "the closest thing to the ideal of a body bound together by a universal devotion to a common set of standards derived from a common tradition," a tradition acknowledged by all who have been trained in it. In the intellectual disintegration of the postwar years he saw the discipline of science much as the thinkers of the Renaissance saw the discipline of humanism: as the means of creating and sustaining a responsible, rational clerisy for a free world.

From 1962, through his periodical *Minerva*, published in London, Shils preached this doctrine. *Minerva*, he wrote in its first number, "begins with the assumption that pure science is the heart of scientific work, and the university is its proper place." "The editor of *Minerva*," he went on, in an almost evangelical strain, "believes in the reality of the world-wide intellectual community, and wishes *Minerva* to have a share in maintaining and strengthening that community." So he sought "to draw into its circle of contributors scholars, scientists, and administrators" not only from the West but also from the Communist countries. Science was to dissolve the confrontation of the Cold War more effectively, perhaps, than could be done by the CIA and its intellectual instrument, the Congress for Cultural Freedom. This last hope was not to be realized so long as the Soviet system lasted—which was hardly surprising since, at the same time, Shils denounced "demands that scien-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tists or scholars be in agreement with the policies of their governments." Such demands, he declared, were illegitimate and had no place in *Minerva*. Thirty years later, he had to admit that, in all that time, "the Soviet Union, as it was," had proved "a barren field." But by then the prospect had brightened. The counterrevolution of 1989–91 had taken place; the Soviet Union "as it was" had dissolved and the hope which had failed could be entertained anew.

The proper function of intellectuals and of the universities, the organization of science, respect for tradition, defense of cultural freedom—these themes run through Shils's work. Perhaps, in the end, this cosmopolitan American-Russian Jew had become something like an English Whig—a Whig of the best period, before the rot had set in. He believed in liberty and reason sustained by an organic, coherent, but plural society. He opposed all forms of absolutism, intellectual or political, standing equally firm against Communism and McCarthyism; and if these robust beliefs did not always recommend him in the postwar academic world with its labile extremism, what of that? As a professional sociologist, his reputation was secure, and he was in demand.

In the early postwar years, Shils combined his professorship at Chicago with a readership at the London School of Economics. Later, in 1960, he was lured to Cambridge, as visiting professor, by those who wished to see sociology recognized as an academic discipline and some intellectual rigor introduced into a subject which had suddenly become fashionable—perhaps too fashionable for its own good; for by now it was the favored subject, or perhaps the slogan, of the New Left. So Noël Annan, as *coryphaeus* of that party—he has since settled down under his coronet—carried him in triumph to King's College. Since the Fellows of that college were then discarding its traditions as fast as they could, stripping the altars with a will, and dancing, sandal-shod, on their broken relics, Shils was not entirely happy there; and when the pace quickened under Annan's successor, the swinging Provost Edmund Leach, who declared that anyone over the age of fifty should be forbidden to teach, or perhaps to live, he was glad to migrate to a rather less *avant-garde* institution: Peterhouse.

What could be more appropriate? Surely Peterhouse was ideally suited to Shils. A small college, a "primary group" held together not by the distant authority of its Master but by tribal cohesion at a lower level, a society tenacious of tradition and yet containing within itself forward-looking scientists of the greatest distinction. Surely they were made for each other—at least if Peterhouse was viewed from outside, from Provost Leach's *abbaye de Thélème* down the road. Internal experience may not have entirely confirmed external views: it seldom does; but certainly Shils became devoted to Peterhouse. He showed his devotion by staying there after his retirement and by great practical generosity. He also inspired devotion in others. In his last illness, the former college butler, Mr. Moffett, his neighbor in Tennis Court Terrace, insisted on flying to Chicago to look after him, as he had done so often before.

When I think of Ed Shils, how do I see him? Sometimes I see him in perpetual motion, flying here, there, everywhere, to service his Republic of Letters: mobilizing contributors, seeing to the printing of his successive periodicals, turning up suddenly, now in Germany, at a conference to celebrate the ultimate triumph of cultural freedom in Berlin, now in Italy, for his Tusculan disputations, held, by invitation of his friend Pope John Paul II, in the papal summer palace of Castel Gandolfo. Or I see him momentarily established in his study in Tennis Court Terrace, surrounded by books and papers in all languages, with his green eye-shade over his eyes and his bottle of green ink at hand; writing, correcting, editing essays, articles, reviews for *Minerva*. Or perhaps he appears to me in his kitchen—and sometimes in my own kitchen too, even in Oxfordshire, where he would reg-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ularly visit us, after my retirement from Peterhouse—bent over the oven or the stove, cooking those highly spiced dishes, from ingredients sought out sometimes in Cambridge, sometimes in Soho. Some of those dishes I know only from hearsay: in particular the famous *purée* of mashed aubergines cooked slowly over a hickory fire, which was commonly known as "Ed's muck." It looked, I am told, "like a cowpat, and was absolutely delicious."

When I first learned that Ed's life and his services to learning, social thought, and Peterhouse were to be commemorated in this church, I was, I admit, a little surprised. He was, after all, a Jewish agnostic, brought up in Quaker Philadelphia, matured in Baptist Chicago, and committed to secular reason. Ought he not to be remembered, like other free spirits, in an impersonal, antiseptic lecture room, in an atmosphere of Benthamite severity, rather than in a high Anglican church, the church of Cosin and Crashaw, redolent of incense, permeated with memories of elaborate ritual: golden candlesticks, swirling chasubles, archaic liturgy, Laudian beauty of holiness? However, on reflection, I modified this view. After all, he respected tradition and regarded religion not indeed as revealed truth but as a necessary component of culture and human life, which are imperfect and impoverished without it. I think he would have liked his commemoration to be here.

Forthcoming in *The New Criterion:*

What Gore Vidal remembers *by John Simon*
The qualities of Robert Musil *by Roger Kimball*
George Templeton Strong on life & music
by James F. Penrose
The achievement of F. R. Leavis *by Paul Dean*
The legacy of Linus Pauling *by Paul R. Gross*
A new life of Lincoln *by James W. Tuttleton*
Four poems by Marceline Desbordes-Valmore
translated & with an introduction by Louis Simpson

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The final volumes in the highly acclaimed series

COMPLETE ROMAN DRAMA IN TRANSLATION

David R. Slavitt and
Palmer Bovie, Series Editors

In this five-volume series—featuring lively translations by leading poet-scholars—classic Latin drama comes alive for a new generation of readers.

TERENCE: THE COMEDIES

translated by Palmer Bovie, Constance Carrier, and Douglass Parker

Contents and translators: *The Girl from Andros (Andria)*, Palmer Bovie • *The Self-Tormenter (Heautontimorumenos)*, Palmer Bovie • *The Eunuch (Eunouchus)*, Douglass Parker • *Phormio*, Douglass Parker • *The Brothers (Adelphoe)*, Constance Carrier • *Her Husband's Mother (Hecyra)*, Constance Carrier

$15.95 paperback

SENECA: THE TRAGEDIES

Volume I
translated by David R. Slavitt

Contents: *Trojan Women* • *Thyestes* • *Phaedra* • *Medea* • *Agamemnon*

$12.95 paperback

SENECA: THE TRAGEDIES

Volume II
edited by David R. Slavitt

Contents and translators: *Oedipus*, Rachel Hadas • *Hercules Furens*, Dana Gioia • *Hercules Oetaeus*, Stephen Sandy • *Octavia*, Kelly Cherry • *The Phoenician Women*, David R. Slavitt

$15.95 paperback

PLAUTUS: THE COMEDIES

Volumes I, II, III, and IV
edited by David R. Slavitt and Palmer Bovie

"The works of Plautus," writes Palmer Bovie, "mark the real beginning of Roman literature." Now Bovie and David Slavitt have brought together a distinguished group of translators in a four-volume set of all twenty-one surviving comedies of one of Western literature's greatest dramatists.

Contents and translators:

Volume I: *Amphitryon*, Constance Carrier • *Miles Gloriosus*, Erich Segal • *Captivi*, Richard Moore • *Casina*, Richard Beacham • *Curculio*, Henry Taylor

Volume II: *Rudens*, Constance Carrier • *Aulularia*, Palmer Bovie • *Bacchides*, James Tatum • *Mercator*, George Garrett • *Truculentus*, James Tatum

Volume III: *Poenulus*, Janet Burroway • *Asinaria*, Fred Chappell • *Trinummus*, Daniel Mark Epstein • *Epidicus*, Constance Carrier • *Mostellaria*, Palmer Bovie

Volume IV: *Persa*, Palmer Bovie • *Menaechmi*, Palmer Bovie • *Cistellaria*, R. H. W. Dillard • *Pseudolus*, Richard Beacham • *Stichus*, Carol Poster • *Vidularia*, John Wright

$15.95 paperback, each volume

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS

Hampden Station, Baltimore, Maryland 21211 • To order, call 1-800-537-5487.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Critical Review

An Interdisciplinary Journal *of* Politics *and* Society

"A miracle: a genuinely interesting, civilized publication." — *Robert Heilbroner*

"CRITICAL REVIEW gives every sign of actually becoming the place — so long talked about but to my knowledge never before realized — where serious scholars working in very different modes actually conduct useful discussions with each other." — *Bertell Ollman*

"One of the more interesting journals these days because it is scholarly, quirky, and unpredictable." — *Daniel Bell*

"An excellent publication." — *Anthony Giddens*

IN RECENT ISSUES:

Rational Choice Theory in Political Science Debated Robert P. Abelson, Dennis Chong, Daniel Diermeier, John Ferejohn, Morris P. Fiorina, Donald P. Green, Stanley Kelley, Jr., Robert E. Lane, Susanne Lohmann, James Bernard Murphy, Peter C. Ordeshook, Debra Satz, Norman Schofield, Kenneth A. Shepsle, Ian Shapiro, Michael Taylor

Wealth and Happiness James Q. Wilson

Friendship and Happiness Robert E. Lane

Consuming Goods and the Good of Consuming Colin Campbell

Regulation Can Work Cass R. Sunstein

The End of the Soviet Union Peter Rutland

Government and Financial Crises Charles P. Kindleberger

Liberals as Communitarians Will Kymlicka, Charles Taylor

Communitarianism as Nationalism Jeffrey Friedman

Community vs. State Peter Simpson

Community and Happiness James Hudson

Libertarianism vs. Free-Market Environmentalism Terry Anderson, Mark Sagoff

On the Practicability of Liberalism Leszek Kolakowski

Human Rights in the Modern State Harvey Mansfield

Locke: Liberal or Radical? Richard Ashcraft, Thomas Horne

Leftist Legal Formalism Richard A. Posner

Monetary Malpractice at the Fed James M. Buchanan & David I. Fand

Richard Rorty's Liberalism Ronald Beiner

J. G. Merquior, 1941–1991 Ernest Gellner

F. A. Hayek, 1899–1992 Israel M. Kirzner

Hayek Revisited Mark Blaug

MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION GUIDE AND BACK ISSUE LIST AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

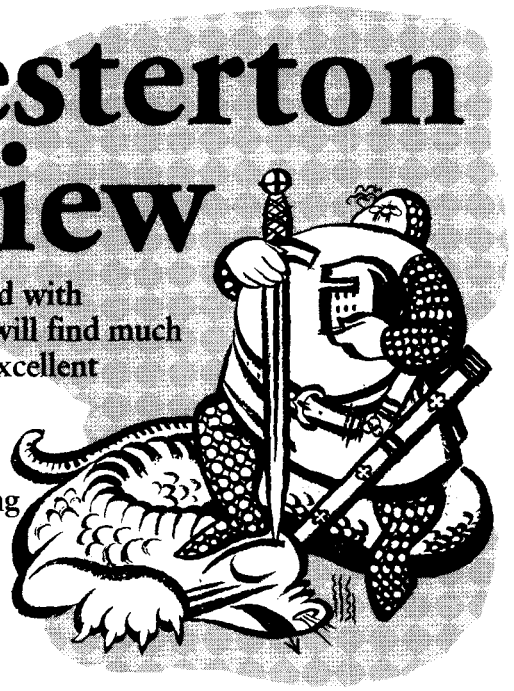
Annual (4 issue) U.S. subscriptions: $15 students with copy of ID, $29 individuals, $54 institutions. Outside U.S: $15 students, $35 individuals via surface mail, $62 institutions via surface mail; add $15 for air mail. Send check, money order, or Visa/MC number and expiration date to: CRITICAL REVIEW, Yale Stn. Box 205416, Dept. 3, New Haven CT 06520, or fax credit card information to (203) 397-8170.

(ISSN 0891-3811)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Special Offer to the

Chesterton Review



"Anyone concerned with traditional values will find much of interest in this excellent journal."

Ted Byfield, Founding Editor,
The Alberta Report

"There is something in every issue of the *Review* to surprise and delight me."

Garry Wills, author and critic

Subscribe now and save up to *30% off* the ordinary subscription rate.

Plus This Special Offer For New Subscribers:

For each $35.00 subscription to our quarterly, the new subscriber will also receive a ***free copy*** of one or more of the following special issues:

*❑ Twentieth Anniversary Special Issue
*❑ Ethics and Economics in Post-Communist Europe
*❑ George Bernanos
*❑ C. S. Lewis
❑ Maurice Baring
❑ Father Brown and Detective Fiction
❑ Christopher Dawson
❑ George Grant
❑ Hilaire Belloc
❑ Charles Dickens
❑ Japanese Christian Writers
❑ Karl Kraus and Aurel Kolnai
❑ Cardinal Manning
❑ Chesterton and the Modernist Crisis

New subscribers receive a **free copy** of any one of our jumbo special issues (indicated by an asterisk) normally sold for $15.00 each **OR two free copies** of any of the regular special issues normally sold for $9.00. Please check which of the special issues you have chosen as your bonus.

Please enter my membership to the *Chesterton Review* for one/two years at $35.00 per year. (Outside Canada payable in U. S. dollars.)
❑ One year ($35.00) ❑ Two Years ($70.00)

Name .....

Address .....

City .....

Province/State ..... Postal/Zip Code .....

Charge to VISA # ..... Expiry Date .....

Make cheque payable to:
CHESTERTON REVIEW, 1437 College Drive, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7N OW6 Canada **or for faster service for your VISA order call:** (U.S.A.) PHONE or FAX 1-**800-260-9363** Elsewhere, PHONE: 1-306-966-8917 or FAX: 1-306-966-8904

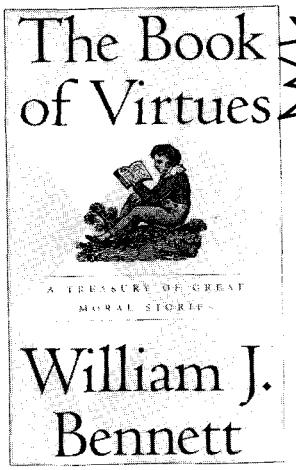
"SERIOUS AND LIVELY, SCHOLARLY AND POPULAR, ECUMENICAL AND PARTISAN ... A REBUKE TO THOSE WHO SUPPOSE SERIOUS WRITING CANNOT BE FUN TO READ OR THAT AN ORTHODOX VIEWPOINT MUST BE A NARROW ONE."

ROBERT P. GEORGE,
DEPT. OF POLITICS,
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Giant 831 pages ★
Title & author index

HUNDREDS of classic moral stories to help shape your child's character — AND taste for good reading



$27.50 in stores — yours FREE

Rush Limbaugh explains why he gives this extraordinary anthology by Reagan Cabinet member William Bennett his unqualified endorsement:

"*The Book of Virtues* is built on an old philosophical principle nearly forgotten in the public discussion (and in certain recent presidential campaigns), but it is an idea I have long championed: Character matters. What a concept! But beware — some of the lessons in this book are rooted in religion, which means the anthology will be ruled unconstitutional if carried into an American school.

It belongs, however, in every home. *The Book of Virtues* is a superb collection, certain to fortify you and yours for a lifetime of morality, goodness, and right thinking."

Mr. Bennett groups the selections according to the ten virtues or good habits they aim to instill:

Self-Discipline ★ Compassion
★ Responsibility ★ Friendship
★ Work ★ Courage ★ Perseverance
★ Honesty ★ Loyalty ★ Faith

Each section carries its own introductory essay, and the selections have explanatory notes where necessary. You get an amazing 384 selections. Most are stories, of course, but you also get generous helpings of inspiring verse.

The selections range from half a page to several pages — all short enough to be read aloud at bedtime, during a class or homeschool session, or by young readers on their own. Adults will be delighted to meet many old favorites again, and to discover neglected gems that enriched the moral life of previous generations.

"America has long been in need of a C. S. Lewis . . . William J. Bennett, the former Secretary of Education and drug czar, may be as close in intellectual likeness to Lewis as America has had at the national level." — CAL THOMAS

"Mr. Bennett has created a treasury no conservative parent would want to be without. For conservative parents know the role such stories can play in moral education. The early building of character depends heavily on examples, both in this world and in literature . . . . What Mr. Bennett has provided, then, is not just a source of enjoyment and literary education, but a contribution to moral literacy and a path back to social order for future generations." — *National Review*

How to get this $27.50 treasury FREE

How the Club Works

Every 4 weeks (13 times a year) you get a free copy of the Club Bulletin, which offers you the Featured Selection plus a good choice of Alternates. Books on current issues, religion, education, homeschooling, politics, children's books, etc. — all of interest to conservatives. ★ If you want the Featured Selection, do nothing. It will come automatically. ★ If you don't want the Featured Selection, or you do want an Alternate, indicate your wishes on the handy card enclosed with your Bulletin and return it by the deadline date. ★ The majority of Club books are offered at 20-50% discounts, plus a charge for shipping and handling. ★ As soon as you buy and pay for 3 books at regular Club prices, your membership may be ended at any time, either by you or by the Club. ★ If you ever receive a Featured Selection without having had 10 days to decide if you want it, you may return it at Club expense for full credit. ★ The Club will offer regular Superbargains, mostly at 70-95% discounts plus shipping and handling. Superbargains do not count toward fulfilling your Club obligation, but do enable you to buy fine books at giveaway prices. ★ Only one membership per household.

CONSERVATIVE BOOK CLUB
33 OAKLAND AVENUE • HARRISON, N.Y. 10528

Please accept my membership in the Club and send me FREE the 831-page, $27.50 *Book of Virtues* by William J. Bennett. I agree to buy 3 additional books at regular Club prices over the next 18 months. I also agree to the Club rules spelled out in this coupon.

NEW C-6

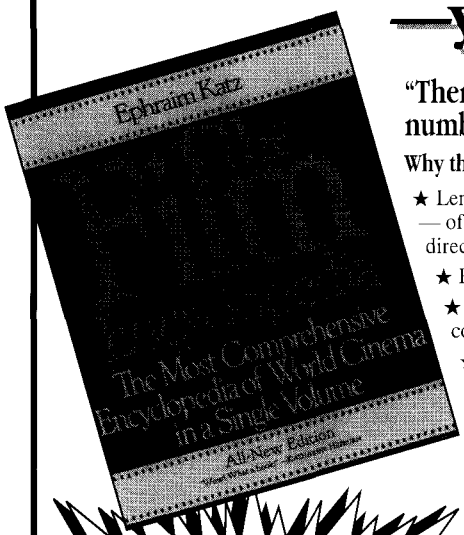
Name _____

Address _____

City _____ *State* _____ *Zip* _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The finest film encyclopedia, updated through 1993.
$25 value —yours FREE!



"There is no question that Katz's FILM ENCYCLOPEDIA is number one."—*Film Library Quarterly*

Why the rave? Because this giant volume has, well, EVERYTHING...

★ Lengthy entries for stars and feature players, directors and producers — of course. But also for screenwriters, composers, designers, art directors, cinematographers, etc.

★ Profiles of the studios and film centers

★ How movies developed, country by country

★ The whole technical side: terms, equipment, inventions, techniques, job titles, etc.

★ Complete Academy Award winners, year by year, in the 7 top categories through 1993

★ Styles of filmmaking ★ Film events and organizations

★ Hundreds of additions since the original volume, including new entries for dozens of stars ... the new generation of studios and studio executives ... talent agencies ... technical developments ... and entries reflecting the growth of Asian, African and Latin American cinema

★ *"The best there is ... monumental, readable."* —*Screen International* ★

More 5-Star Features
Over 1,500 pages
—238 more than the old edition
• Over 7,000 entries • Over 3 million words • Oversized 7 x 9-3/16 • Easy to use. Lies flat wherever you open it • Readable 2-column format

But the real test of a film reference book lies in the biographies. They are the main reason we need a film reference so often. Here THE FILM ENCYCLOPEDIA shines. The profiles are rich in personal and career details; date and place of birth ... schools ... marriages and divorces ... year of death ... the ups and downs of every career.

Above all, the filmographies. For major personnel, they are complete. For others, they include every important film, plus a host of minor ones. *And they're all updated through 1993!*

How to get this $25 giant FREE

How the Club Works

Every 4 weeks (13 times a year) you get a free copy of the Club bulletin, PREVIEWS, which offers the Featured Selection plus a nice choice of Alternates: books on films, TV, music, occasionally tapes and videocassettes. ★ If you want the Featured Selection, do nothing. It will come automatically. ★ If you don't want the Featured Selection or you do want an Alternate, indicate your wishes on the handy card enclosed and return it by the deadline date. ★ The majority of Club books are offered at 20-50% discounts, plus a charge for shipping and handling. ★ As soon as you buy and pay for 4 books, tapes or videocassettes at regular Club prices, your membership may be ended at any time, either by you or by the Club. ★ If you ever receive a Featured Selection without having had 10 days to decide if you want it, you may return it at Club expense for full credit. ★ For every book, tape or videocassette you buy at regular Club price, you receive one or more Bonus Book Certificates. These entitle you to buy many Club books at deep discounts, usually 60-80% off. These Bonus Books do not count toward fulfilling your Club obligation but do enable you to buy fine books at giveaway prices. ★ PREVIEWS also includes news about members and their hobbies. You are welcome to send in similar items. The Club will publish any such item it deems suitable. FREE. This is a real CLUB! ★ Good service. No computers! ★ Only one membership per household.

MOVIE/ENTERTAINMENT BOOK CLUB

33 Oakland Avenue • Harrison, N.Y. 10528

Please accept my membership in the Club and send, FREE and postpaid, Ephraim Katz's FILM ENCYCLOPEDIA in the oversized $25 quality paperback format. I agree to buy 4 additional books, tapes or videotapes at regular Club prices in the next 2 years. I also agree to the Club rules spelled out in this coupon. **NC-12**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

19TH & 20TH CENTURY EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN MASTERS

PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS, SCULPTURE

The School of Barbizon
French Impressionism
German Expressionism
The Bauhaus
Modern Masters

Lyonel Feininger Catalogue Raisonné in preparation
Feininger archives of drawings and watercolors

Valuer and Dealer in Fine Art
Art Advisory Service
Authentification Service

Member of the Private Art Dealers Association (P.A.D.A.)
Membre du Syndicat National des Antiquaires et Négociants en Objets d'Art, Tableaux Anciens et Modernes, France
Membre de la Confederation Internationale des Négociants en Oeuvres d'Art (C.I.N.O.A.)

ACHIM MOELLER FINE ART
52 EAST 76TH STREET NEW YORK NY 10021
TELEPHONE 212 988 8483 FAX 439 6663

The New Criterion
850 Seventh Avenue
Suite 503
New York NY 10019

Second Class Postage
Paid at New York, NY
and at additional
Mailing Offices

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED